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THE
CATECHUMEN'S GUIDE,

PREPARED WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE

TO THE WANTS OF THE

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

IN

THE UNITED STATES.

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PREFACE.

This book, as the title implies, is intended to aid Catechumens in their preparations for the lecture room, so that their instruction, which must ever be regarded as an important branch of ministerial duty, may be rendered more interesting to the pastor, and more useful to themselves. But, although designed chiefly for this purpose, it may also, perhaps, in some degree, assist the intelligent and advanced Christian in his investigations of truth and duty, and prove advantageous to those who have just entered the ministry.

The introduction to the work, is a defence of the plan of Catechetical Instruction; this is followed by an address to Catechumens, and the whole closes with an address to Young Communicants. The questions have been appended at the bottom of each page, so as to exercise, as much as possible, the reflective powers of the reader. A serious objection generally urged against catechetical instruction, is the fact, (often too well established,) that the answers of the Catechumen are mere recitation from memory, and that, consequently, they are not to be regarded

as expressive of the real sentiments and convictions of the heart. It has been thought best, therefore, to leave the text unbroken, so that it may be read like other works of a popular doctrinal character.

In the preparation of this work, the author has unhesitatingly availed himself of all the materials within his reach. Many works of a similar kind have been published in Germany, and the late production of Dr. Harnisch, containing illustrations of the ten commandments, is highly valuable, as it embraces, on this subject, all the excellences of preceding writers. To this work, with others, the author has had access, and acknowledges himself much indebted. Most of the prayers have been translated from the German, and others have been compiled from our excellent Liturgy.

A work similar to the one now offered to the church, has long been a desideratum; should the present imperfect effort promote in any degree, the purpose for which it is intended, the author will have reason to rejoice that he has not labored in vain. He is fully aware of its many deficiencies; but these he has found it more easy to discover, than to avoid. He submits it therefore—not to the severe ordeal of impartial and enlightened criticism—but to the prayerful attention of those, for whose benefit it has been prepared.

INTRODUCTION.

It has ever been customary in the Lutheran church to instruct candidates for confirmation in the first principles or leading doctrines of Christianity. This course of preparatory instruction, consisting of a series of catechetical lectures, is commenced by the pastor a few months previous to the time of confirmation. And, severely as it has been reprehended, by those who have remained voluntarily ignorant of its advantages, the plan is pursued by the ministers of our communion, under the conviction, that so far from being evil in its tendency, its universal adoption would be the commencement of a new and brighter era, in the history of the church.

The practice in question *is based on the very constitution of the human mind, and is clearly recognized in the gospel itself.*

Were an individual about to engage another to undertake for him some hazardous enterprise, he would first carefully explain to him its nature, and warn him of all the dangers in the way of his success; and he would rather present to his mind many imaginary difficulties, than to conceal a single obstacle he would be likely to encounter. This would be the only way to test his courage and determination. Were this rational precaution

neglected, the person employed might suddenly meet some unforeseen and unexpected danger, which would cause him to shrink from all further effort, and thus the enterprise would fail. Let us take a familiar example, for the sake of illustration.

When it was determined by the American congress to contend with England for the independence of these United States, and when an army was raised for this purpose, every individual belonging to that band of patriots, was well acquainted with the superior strength and facilities of the enemy. It was known that the English troops were well disciplined, that their means of carrying on the war were abundant, that the contest would, in all probability, be prolonged for years, unless America should consent to yield to the unjust oppressions of her foe, and that there were many circumstances to threaten the total defeat of our arms. With this knowledge of the difficulties they would have to encounter in contending for their rights, our forefathers, nevertheless, pledged "their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor," in the cause of freedom. And why did they persevere until they conquered? Was it simply because they were engaged in a righteous undertaking? No. It was because they had *counted the cost*. They pledged their lives, under the conviction that life might be the forfeit of their exertions. Danger did not intimidate them, because they expected to meet it. Defeat did not dishearten them, because their own inferiority in numbers and resources, scarcely allowed them to hope for conquest.

Thus it is with the religion of Jesus Christ. It requires those who embrace it to sacrifice interest to duty, and to carry on a perpetual contest with the sinful desires

and passions of their own hearts. It does not admit of indolence and inactivity, but it calls for the diligent and unremitted exercise of all the mental, moral and bodily powers. The Christian is appropriately called a soldier of the cross. He has a battle to fight, and a victory to gain. There are enemies within him and around him. And the courage and determination of every one, who wishes to enlist under the banners of the gospel, cannot be tested, unless he is made acquainted with the holy requirements of the great Captain of our salvation.

I lay it down, therefore, as a principle which ought to regulate every minister of the gospel, that *no one should be received into the church, whilst ignorant of the doctrines taught, and the moral obligations enforced in the word of God.* Now it is a fact, that persons have been frequently received into church-fellowship, whilst unacquainted with the most obvious truths and simple requirements of the gospel. Nothing can be more detrimental to the interests of piety, than this mistaken measure. And we may safely attribute to this cause, the melancholy dissensions that have arisen, and still exist, in individual congregations, and the actual defection of many of the professed followers of Christ.

Suppose the soldiers of the American revolution had been ignorant of the resources of the enemy, and of the order that pervaded their ranks, and suppose they had imagined that they were to contend in battle with a few undisciplined troops like themselves, it is easy to conceive that the very sight of a well-disciplined army, with all the "pomp and circumstance" attending it, would have sent terror to almost every heart. Or had they been assured that congress would supply all their wants, and ad-

minister to the necessities of their families, and secure to them every comfort and luxury, with what feelings would they have encountered the fatigue and misery they endured, and how long would they have witnessed, without murmuring and revolt, the burning of their houses and their barns, and the total destruction of their crops and cattle? But they knew the worst, and this enabled them to face every danger with firmness and determination.

Now it is equally necessary, that candidates for church-membership should be made acquainted with all the duties they will have to perform, and all the sacrifices they will be required to make, as the followers of Christ. If they are destitute of this knowledge, there will be great danger that they will not persevere to the end. There may be those, who, at the time of their admission into the church, were wholly, or in a great degree, ignorant of their duty, and have nevertheless been diligent in the discharge of every obligation, subsequently revealed to them. Yet, I am bold to say, that the policy to which I have just animadverted, is injudicious and unscriptural, and, in many instances, ruinous to the interests of religion. And therefore I contend, that persons who are but partially awakened to a sense of moral obligation, or only alarmed at the consequences of their guilt, *should be fully enlightened* in regard to the most prominent points of Christian doctrine and duty, before they are received into fellowship with the church.

Not long since, a female applied to a minister of our church for confirmation. In a conversation with her, he soon discovered, that she was entirely ignorant of Christian duty. She could not read, had never been accustomed to attend the preaching of the gospel, and had been

induced to make this application by some vague and indefinite impression received at a prayer meeting which she had recently attended. It was the day previous to confirmation, when the circumstance I am now relating occurred. The minister explained to her the necessity of being acquainted with the requirements of that Master whom she professed a willingness to serve. He told her that her present feelings might undergo a very material change after she became enlightened in regard to Christian duty, and that it would be impossible for her to test the firmness of her present purpose, without the knowledge of the most prominent truths and obligations of the gospel. He also advised her to attend a course of catechetical instruction, then in progress, and recommended that she should apply to some pious friend to read to her the Scriptures, as she could not read them herself. But it proved in the end, that the feeling which prompted her request to be admitted into the church, was momentary, and transient, and unfounded on a real sense of duty. And the subsequent conduct of this individual, confirmed the wisdom of the measure pursued in her case.

It must ever be remembered, that man is an intelligent being, possessing reason and judgment, and the power of choice, and therefore to be properly influenced as a free, moral agent, he must be made acquainted with all the facts and circumstances, attending any course of action he is requested to pursue. In reference to religious truth, it is essential that he become persuaded,—1. Of the necessity of a divine revelation; 2. That the Bible is a divine revelation; and finally, by arguments drawn from the Bible itself, and addressed to his understanding, that he is obligated by every serious consideration, and by every

worthy motive, to love and serve that Being who has revealed his character and will to man. The light thus diffused throughout the mind, and brought home to the conscience by the spirit of truth, will become the power of God unto salvation. The most of those who live in Christian lands are already convinced of the divine origin of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and all that remains to be done in this case, is to state and explain the prominent doctrines of revelation, and make known the duties they involve.

I have said, that the practice for which I am contending, is clearly recognized in the Bible itself. This position I shall now endeavor to establish. Here let it be borne in mind, that catechetical instruction is nothing more, or less, than the statement and illustration of Christian doctrine and duty. The faithful minister exhibits to the members of his class, the whole system of evangelical truth. He describes to them the character of that God whom they have offended. He speaks of their own sinfulness, and their need of a Saviour. He dwells upon the scenes of Calvary, and points to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world. He exhorts them to flee from the wrath to come. He lays various motives before them. He appeals to their love of happiness and their dread of suffering. He warns and entreats. In a word, he employs every argument which he thinks will influence their decisions, and arrest their attention to duty, and the interests of their immortal souls. Now this is the only course to be pursued, if man, as a rational being, possessing the power of choice, is to be influenced by motives or persuasion. Does the Bible then recognize and sanction this kind of influence? Let us see.

It is evident in the first place, that the requisitions of the moral law are not *arbitrary*; and though God, as the moral Governor of the universe, has an undoubted right to require the obedience of man without expostulation or argument, in revealing his will to our sinful race he has graciously condescended, not only to state the ground of his requirements, but to present every motive to obedience, which infinite affection and wisdom could suggest.

Again: The intellectual powers of man have become more or less affected by the fall. One of the most dreadful consequences of sin is the prostration of those faculties of the mind, which, had they remained unimpaired, would have enabled us, at a glance, to admire the infinite perfections of the Deity, to be grateful for the evidences of his goodness, and to acknowledge the reasonableness of all his requirements. In other words, the *moral* condition of the sinner, has influenced his *intellectual* condition, *in as far as religious truth and moral duty are concerned*. Under these circumstances, how is apostate man to become a worshipper of the living God? The wisdom of the Almighty has established the means of imparting light to his understanding through the medium of divine revelation. And this is just such a revelation as he wants. It is admirably adapted, not only to his mental, but also to his moral constitution. It addresses him not only as a rational being, but also as a being so depraved by sin, as to remain unaffected by the simple statements of duty. It meets all the prejudices of the human heart, and takes from the sinner every apology for non-compliance with its inspired dictates.

Refer for a moment to the book of the prophet Isaiah, (i. 18) "Come now and let us reason together, saith the

Lord." This appeal, which so beautifully and touchingly exhibits the condescension of the Creator, unfolds to us the true Character of man as a free agent—a character which, though imparted by a higher power, is never to be lost sight of, in any effort that is made to influence the individual thus constituted. In all the overtures of divine mercy, man is left to choose for himself, an eternal destiny of happiness or woe. And it is the design of God that every truth should be exhibited to the sinner's view, so that he may have no excuse for his rebellion, and also that his resolution of obedience may spring from a conviction of the reasonableness of the divine law. It is thus with every true and persevering child of God. He walks in the path of duty, because reason, *enlightened by revelation*, points it out to him as the path of wisdom and of peace.

The address that was made to the Israelites by Elijah, when at his command they were assembled by Ahab, at Mount Carmel, may also serve to illustrate this point. "How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him; if Baal, then follow him." Here the question of their allegiance to God is thrown open to discussion; and the Israelites are justly censured for remaining in a state of indecision, because their very constitution as rational beings, enabled them to pass judgment on the conflicting claims of the Lord and Baal, to their service and their love. They are urged to test these claims, and to decide, by their knowledge of the attributes of the true God, and of the idol of the Zidonians, which of the two, their duty, as well as their interest, required them to worship.

The testimony of Christ in reference to this question

is still more satisfactory, as he proves the absurdity of professing an attachment to him, or his cause, before we have acquired the knowledge of the many sacrifices and duties, which that profession involves. The Saviour said to the multitude who followed him: "which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it."

This counting the cost is a mental process, and consists in that calm deliberation, with which every one is to regard the responsibilities of the Christian character, before he assumes them. As already remarked, every disciple of Christ is required to make sacrifices, if faithful to the interests of his Master's cause. Many of these borrow their complexion from the circumstances of the individual himself; as in the primitive age of the Church, the Christian became the child of poverty, and the victim of persecution, in the very nature of the case. *But there are principles of action, established in the gospel, which demand the exercise of a self-denying spirit, under every circumstance that is favorable to its manifestation.* "If any man will be my disciple," says the Saviour, "let him deny himself." Hence, no desire is to be indulged, and no affection cherished, in any instance, that is inconsistent with the moral requirements of revealed truth. Every emotion of anger, and every feeling of revenge, is to be subdued. Wealth, honor, and the approbation of the world, are all to be sacrificed, unless they can be acquired in the way of duty. In social intercourse, that golden rule is to be the basis of action: "Do unto others, as you would wish others do unto you." The prosperity of an enemy must not

be envied, nor his downfall excite one feeling of satisfaction. The Christian is ever to pray for those who are unfriendly to his interests—to return good for evil. He is to be unceasingly active in the service of his Lord, no matter what sacrifices and duties that service may involve. He is to let his light shine, in an uninterrupted series of virtuous actions, that they who witness the beneficial results, which flow from a practical compliance with the moral precepts of the gospel, may learn to admire the wisdom, and bless the goodness of its divine Author.

Now there are *emotions of the mind, suddenly excited*, which often lead, or rather, drive many into the church, without reflection, and without the knowledge essential to the strict performance of christian duty. It may be an emotion of *fear* arising from the simple perception of one attribute of Jehovah—his impartial justice; and the consequent certainty that the impenitent will be banished forever from his presence. Or it may be a feeling of *admiration*, excited by another of the divine perfections; the infinite love displayed for a ruined world. When, at the mere impulse of one of these emotions, an individual unites with the church, he cannot be said to act understandingly; for he knows not the weight of duty that will rest upon him.

Let me not be misunderstood. These emotions are of eminent advantage, in as far as they induce the sinner to investigate the claims of the Creator, to human obedience; as well as the nature and extent of his requirements. But no one can be consistently led *by these alone* to profess an attachment to the cause of the Redeemer, inasmuch as this attachment to be firm and

unwavering, must be based on a previous acquaintance with the doctrines and moral precepts of the gospel.

It may be well to remark here, that the knowledge we deem requisite, is the knowledge of *fundamental principles*, or first truths. We only contend for an acquaintance with the essential doctrines and moral precepts of the gospel; and we contend for this, because man, as a voluntary agent, cannot yield to the influence of these precepts and doctrines, before he knows them. Nothing can be more self-evident. Besides, this knowledge is easily attained. And hence, there is not the shadow of an excuse for those who receive persons into full communion with the church, as long as they are ignorant of the doctrines and moral requirements of Christianity, and have never made the will and character of the Creator, subjects of inquiry and meditation.

Such persons in applying for church membership are actuated by an impulse, or emotion, with which the judgment has nothing to do.

When, on the other hand, the sinner discovers, after a prayerful investigation of the claims of the Creator on his obedience and love, that these claims are well established and just, his decision to submit to God (if decision follows) is the result of reflection. He has weighed all the circumstances of the case. He not only believes the *doctrines* of the gospel to be *true*, but finds himself solemnly obligated *to obey its moral precepts*; not merely as the means of promoting his own happiness, but chiefly, because they are the commands of an infinitely wise and holy Being. He decides as a voluntary agent ought to decide—not at the impulse of a

sudden emotion of admiration or fear—but after he has acquired a knowledge of the essential doctrines and precepts of that gospel, which is to constitute the standard of his actions through life, while it administers to his soul, in its promises, the hope of everlasting joy in heaven. Sanctified by the spirit of Truth, this knowledge becomes, in his case, “the power of God unto salvation.” He engages in the service of a master whose requirements are familiar to his mind. He has *counted the cost*, and acts understandingly when he announces his allegiance to the cause of heaven.

There are two other points of view, in which this subject is of the highest interest.

1. The injury sustained by the church, in the admission of members, who are unenlightened in regard to Christian doctrine and duty.

2. The important benefits secured to the church, by every accession of those, who have a “zeal according to knowledge.”

I am aware of the objection, often urged against the system of preparatory instruction, as it exists in the Lutheran church. It is said, that, under its operation, persons are admitted into church-fellowship, after having committed to memory the words of the Catechism, before the truths of the gospel have exercised their saving influence over the heart. But this objection cannot be sustained. For every candid inquirer will, at once, perceive, that a course of catechetical lectures will no sooner lead to this result, than the system of bible class instruction, so eminently useful wherever it has been adopted. The one is but a modification of the other. It is the object of both systems to impress upon the minds

of the young, the momentous truths of divine revelation.

I do not deny that some ministers have received persons into full communion with the church, after a systematic course of religious instruction, without requiring the evidences of genuine piety. And I know that wherever this plan has been pursued, the result has been lamentable in the extreme. Formality in religion, and the habitual neglect and violation of duty, must inevitably attend this policy. For whoever is not imbued with the *spirit* of the gospel, must necessarily be as dead as the letter itself. I have seen members of the church who have arrived at the age of thirty or forty years, and have never partaken of the Lord's supper since the day of their confirmation, fifteen or twenty years ago. For fifteen or twenty years, ever since they united with the church, they have lived in the constant neglect of duty. Such individuals are destitute of all evangelical zeal. They perform no act, which, by the disinterestedness of its motive, impels others to exertion in the sacred cause of Christ. Every thing they do, is done in the cold, calculating spirit of selfishness. They are prayerless, and unconcerned about the salvation of others. And were the conversion of the world to depend upon their efforts, it would never take place.

But if there are members of this character in the church, it may be in consequence of ministerial negligence, or of self-deception. It cannot be the result of a plain statement of gospel truth, when the mind is prayerfully directed to its contemplation. We shall have occasion to advert hereafter, to the important advantages that flow to the church, from the faithful performance of this part of ministerial duty.

It is indeed a matter of deep regret, that, in any instance, a mere theoretical acquaintance with the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, has been considered a sufficient ground of admission into church communion. But there is an evil, of equal, if not greater magnitude, in a church, composed of members, whose attention has perhaps been suddenly arrested by listening to a single discourse, and who, on the very first indication of any thing like zeal for the service of God, or anxiety for their individual happiness, have been hurried into church-fellowship—their minds unenlightened, save by the solitary gleam of knowledge, to which they owed their first impressions. There is a spirit of proselytism abroad, which cannot be too severely censured, when it introduces into the church, the certain means of its corruption. And it is to be feared that there are ministers of the gospel, who are less solicitous to swell the ranks of true believers, than to increase the strength and influence of party.

Make the sinner acquainted with the fundamental principles of inspired truth; the humility he must exercise, the sorrow he must feel for past offences, the sacrifice he must make of this world's pleasures, perhaps of friendship; tell him of the important duties he will be required to perform as a "follower of the Lamb;" and if he shrink not from the trial then; if with an intimate knowledge of the prominent features of the gospel system, he is still willing to embrace it; if pride, self-sufficiency, and self-interest, try their influence over him, in vain, there will be some reason for the belief, that his wishes are sincere, and his purposes firm.

The injury sustained by the church, in the admission

of members who are unenlightened in regard to Christian doctrine and duty, may be referred to the following heads:

1. *Apostacy* is one of the fatal consequences of this mistaken policy. Persons who have been received into the church, while ignorant of the first principles of gospel truth, and who become eventually enlightened, are often so startled, by their hitherto unsuspected obligations, that they "go back unto perdition." How many instances of this kind does the history of the church afford, especially "in these latter days!" How many are there, who refuse to walk with Christ, as soon as they become aware of the sacrifices which his service demands, and are made acquainted with the duties, which the moral precepts of the gospel impose!

2. Every act of apostacy lowers the profession of the gospel, in the esteem of many who are yet on the side of the world. It frequently determines the wavering in favor of sin, and confirms in the infidel, a spirit of unbelief.

3. The individual who professes Christianity, while ignorant of its principles, may be driven into the lowest depths of scepticism. Let him but hear or read the arguments of the unbeliever, and if no kind friend is near to expose their sophistry, he may, first, begin to waver, until, driven to desperation, by mistaking his own ignorance for the weakness of his cause, he becomes an infidel himself. The wide and rapid spread of infidelity, in the present day, is to be attributed in part, without a question, to this simple, but mischievous and extensively operating cause.

4. Ignorance of Christian doctrine and duty, tends

directly to form the character of the *Enthusiast*. Individuals destitute of the knowledge of the doctrines and moral precepts of the gospel, and admitted into the church while their minds are comparatively unenlightened, may have a species of zeal; but it will be directed in all its efforts by their limited and distorted views. Hence the church is often brought to lament the imprudent measures of its well-meaning, but mistaken friends. And in most cases it will be found impossible to check this zeal, or give it a new and more useful direction. Self-conceit, the offspring of ignorance, will generally resist every effort of truth, to curb, in the unenlightened mind of the enthusiast, those wild and turbulent feelings, to whose impulse he implicitly yields. And in such a character there is a spirit of censoriousness, which condemns all the efforts of an enlightened zeal, as the fruits of lukewarmness and indifference. These are the persons who believe the end justifies the means, and make utility the ground of their proceedings, instead of the plain directions of revealed truth. The tendency of all this is, to create disorder and schism in the church.

5. Ignorance also begets self-righteousness.

6. The last consequence of ignorance to which I shall allude, is *that gross and glaring inconsistency*, which has done more injury to the church than all other causes united. Many who enter the church with wrong impressions of truth and duty, desire to maintain their good standing, though, at the same time, they are worldly-minded, and neglect almost every obligation. Consequently, their professions of piety are loud and frequent, but while they call upon God with their lips, their hearts are far from him. Nothing can be more hurtful

to the interests of religion, than the dissimulation of its professed friends.

In regard to the important benefits, which flow to the church from every accession of those who have a zeal according to knowledge, they are so obvious, we need scarcely offer a single remark.

1. The knowledge of gospel doctrine and duty, *tends to promote harmony of feeling and unity of action* among all the members of the household of faith. The more expansive and evangelical the Christian's views, the less will he feel the influence of a Sectarian spirit. The ages of persecution have always been, emphatically, ages of ignorance. Ever since the protestant Reformation, the light of truth, shining from the sacred page, has been struggling to penetrate the systems of human invention that have obscured it; and now, in this age of candid investigation and enlightened inquiry, Christians begin to see that they stand on common ground, and are fast uniting to promote those mighty schemes of benevolence, which are intended to benefit all mankind. The Bible Society is a monument of enlightened Christian zeal. It serves to illustrate, that a true knowledge of the doctrines and moral precepts of the gospel, tends to unite believers of every name—to create and cherish that harmony of feeling, which leads to unity of action as its natural result. The same may be said of the connection lately formed, between the Home Missionary Society and the Parent Missionary Society of the Lutheran church. It becomes necessary then, in a day like this, to foster this spirit of union, by affording to all applicants for admission into the church, the most enlarged views of duty, so that they may be prepared to take a right stand

in the great enterprises of the age. These views may of course be acquired, and ought to be expanded by reading. But it is a notorious fact, that many of the members of our church have not been accustomed to read the religious intelligence of the day; and every minister should therefore specify, in his lectures to catechumens, the most prominent benevolent operations of the age, explain their design, and earnestly enforce their claims to the co-operation of every follower of Christ. At the same time, he should recommend to their patronage, some religious periodical, as a vehicle of intelligence concerning the spiritual condition and wants of mankind, and as suggesting methods, to extend to the whole human race, the blessings of the gospel.

2. The undeviating *consistency* of the enlightened Christian takes from the infidel his most powerful weapon of attack. The truly enlightened Christian is equally averse from the misguided zeal of the enthusiast, and the cold, selfish policy of the mere nominal professor. He advances in the middle path of steady perseverance and noble enterprise, unerringly pointed out in divine revelation.

When the principles of the gospel *fail* to regulate the moral character of those who profess them, the infidel gains an important advantage in his contest with truth. He holds up the inconsistency of nominal believers, to the ridicule of those whom he wishes to persuade; and the censorious, uncharitable spirit of the unenlightened enthusiast, as well as the carelessness and inactivity of the mere formalist, are employed as arguments against Christianity itself—and too often with the most startling success. Such persons, most gene-

rally, and perhaps invariably, assume the responsibilities of the Christian profession, before they are acquainted with the theory of gospel truth, and hence their inconsistency arises, in the first instance at least, rather from *ignorance* of duty, than from a wilful inattention to its known suggestions. Now were these individuals properly enlightened before entering the church, they would either be prepared for the discharge of Christian duty, otherwise, they would be careful not to undertake its performance. It is therefore in the power of ministers to prevent this evil in a great degree, if not entirely, by opposing hasty admissions, and by requiring candidates for confirmation, to have a distinct and clear knowledge of the doctrines and precepts of Christ, before they embrace his religion, by a public profession of faith.

The Christian, who has acquired a sanctified knowledge of the truth, is neither censorious, uncharitable, nor inactive. He aims unceasingly, to advance the interests of the righteous cause in which he is enlisted, by means, sanctioned in the precepts and example of his divine Redeemer. In his contest with the enemies of truth, he wields the weapons of persuasion. Long-suffering, forbearance, and gentleness, are the inseparable attributes of his character. His piety is without ostentation. He walks humbly before God. And though the unbeliever may have no desire to imitate his actions, or to be controlled by the principles in which they originate, he, nevertheless, finds it impossible to withhold his admiration and respect. It is easy to determine, what would be the consequences, were every member of the church thus equipped for his spiritual warfare—consistent, gentle and forbearing in all his efforts, and yet

wielding "the sword of the spirit," with a skill, not to be resisted, and an energy of purpose not to be subdued. The church would go on in the might of her own strength, conquering and to conquer, and the lovely illustrations of the practical influence of Christianity, afforded in the *conduct* of every follower of the Lamb, would constitute a perpetual barrier of defence, against which the shafts of infidelity would be directed in vain.

Again: *The zeal of the enlightened Christian presents a worthy example to those who are just entering on the path of Christian duty*; and in this respect it is of eminent advantage to the interests of the church. The young disciple of Christ, who finds himself surrounded by examples of consistent and devoted piety, finds the path of duty plain before him; for these examples accord precisely with those impressions which have been fixed upon his mind, in the prayerful and attentive study of the revealed will of God.

And finally we remark that the enlightened Christian is *secure from the influence of error*, and consequently, in a great degree, free from the danger of apostacy. Systems of religious belief, sustained only by human authority, have no other influence on his mind, than to increase his attachment to "the faith once delivered to the Saints." His firm belief in the *doctrines* of revelation, administers to his soul, a hope, as sure and steadfast as the eternal foundation on which it is based. And he is able to give a reason for this hope whenever it is demanded. The *moral precepts* of the gospel are the rule of his life, and thus, all his actions are the fruits of a living faith, and his moral character is gradually

advancing toward that point of perfection, which it must gain, to be meet for the enjoyments of heaven.*

These are, briefly, the results that flow from the sanctified knowledge of the doctrines and moral requirements of the gospel. We are saved by faith: but this saving faith cannot exist until the objects of belief are presented to the mind. The Bible is "the sword of the Spirit," and the influence of the spirit can only be felt where the essential truths of the Bible are known. There may be knowledge without faith, but there cannot be faith without knowledge. There may be zeal where the mind is comparatively unenlightened, but it is not the zeal that gives impulse and direction to the actions of the true believer.

It is the object, and the only object, of catechetical instruction, to present to the mind the doctrines and moral precepts of revealed truth; to represent man as he is, depraved and helpless in his moral nature; to direct his attention to the means of his restoration to moral purity, and consequent happiness as a moral being; to urge the claims of the Creator upon human

* It may be said that we are arguing in favor of points conceded by every one. They may be generally conceded in *theory*, but *practically*, they are by many opposed. A writer in the N. Y. Evangelist, who laments the state of things produced by hasty admissions in the presbyterian church, recommends the establishment of a "*probation class*," where those who wish to unite with the church, may become acquainted with Christian doctrine and duty. And are not the evils of which this writer complains, alarmingly prevalent in our own church? If not there can still be no impropriety in guarding against them. Let us not overlook the fact, that our presbyterian brethren begin to see, and feel, and acknowledge the necessity of an arrangement which has always existed in our church. Every class of Catechumens, is "a probation class."

obedience; in a word, *to bring the sinner to his God*. In every case, where this result is not produced, it is to be attributed to the same cause, that renders the preaching of the gospel so often ineffectual in its solemn appeals to the human heart.

There is one advantage, connected with the system of catechetical instruction, which every faithful minister of our church has found to be of inestimable importance. It affords him an opportunity to assemble together the young, at stated periods, when he can impress upon their minds the sublime doctrines of everlasting truth, and teach them their individual obligation to remember their Creator. Every member of the class is separately addressed, and none, therefore, can escape the counsels and admonitions of the gospel. These solemn lessons, sent home to the heart by the spirit of the Highest, often create permanent impressions of duty; and it is a scene of no ordinary interest, when a band of young immortals, thus trained up for heaven, are solemnly dedicated, by the imposition of hands, to the service of their God. And is it not a matter of the utmost importance, to enlist on the side of truth, the devoted activity of the young, and not suffer them to be thrown, unprotected, amid the gay fascinations of the world? What Christian parent does not feel interested in the religious education of his child! And what period of life is more favorable to moral impressions, than that of youth!

I was conversing the other day with an old man, who enjoyed the advantages of catechetical instruction at a very early age, and was received into the church. He is an enlightened and devoted Christian. I was not only pleased, but edified, in listening to his lucid and

correct views of divine truth and human responsibility. I recollect that, among other things, we were speaking about a bell which had been lately purchased by the congregation to which he belongs. Said he: "I love to hear the sound of the bell, it seems to invite us to the house of prayer. Indeed, we have many calls to visit the sanctuary. The Bible calls; the ministers of religion call; conscience calls; and the *bell* calls." This is one example of the sanctified influence of early religious instruction. The lessons, imparted to the youthful mind of this aged servant of Christ, have expanded into the most enlarged and enlightened conceptions of duty. And the unwritten history of the church, if explored, would afford many exemplifications, equally interesting, of the truth of that inspired dictate: "*Train up a child in the way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.*"

Travellers of intelligence and learning have recorded their testimony in favor of the German system of religious instruction, and have stated, that in Germany they had not met with a child of twelve or fourteen years of age, who was not intimately acquainted with the most important historical and doctrinal parts of the Old and New Testament. And it is presumed, that in an age like this, when it is the prayer and desire of every enlightened Christian to witness the universal establishment of Sunday schools, and Bible classes—it is presumed, I say, that in an age like this, none but those who are ignorant of the advantages secured to the church and the world by the early religious instruction of every succeeding generation, will find fault with a system which aims to accomplish this interesting and momentous result. It is

for the infidel to denominate the firm, unwavering faith of the enlightened Christian, the prejudice of early education—but if the mind of man can be prejudiced *in favor of truth*, and be made to yield to its influence, his eternal interests are safe.

In conclusion I would exhort every parent and every guardian of youth, to bring those, whose immortal interests are intrusted to their charge, under the influence of early religious instruction. I would urge every minister of our church to be faithful to this part of his duty. Let him adhere strictly to that system of preparatory instruction, which has enjoyed the sanction of the most illustrious servants of the church, from the earliest period of its establishment, through every succeeding age, and which has been honored with the approbation of heaven, as the conversion of thousands will testify; and he may confidently look for the most pleasing and beneficial results. Let the young, throughout the church, be early taught to revere the principles of the gospel, and it is easy to trace the tendency of this course in all its bearings, and in the remotest exercise of its influence. The turbulent spirit of the proud and self-conceited enthusiast will be quelled; the boastings of infidelity will be hushed; harmony of feeling will lead to unity of action, among Christians of every name, and the efforts of an enlightened zeal will every where contribute to the rapid and wide dissemination of gospel truth, until “the knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea,” and the dawn of a brighter day will rise upon the nations.

ADDRESS TO CATECHUMENS.

There are two momentous considerations which ought to be impressed upon the minds of those who intend to enter on a course of catechetical instruction. 1. The importance of the duty. 2. The manner in which it must be performed to result in lasting advantage to the soul.

I. The *importance of the duty* will appear evident, if we consider it as *the study of the sacred Scriptures*; that revelation of God to man which describes the attributes of the divine character, makes known the will of the Creator, and points out to the soul the path of endless enjoyment. Regarded in this light, the duty on which you are about to enter appears momentous indeed. In the course of your inquiries, you will discover the true character of the Almighty, as well as the relation which you sustain to him and your fellow beings. The soul is what gives value and dignity to human nature, and distinguishes man, in an eminent degree, from the mere animal creation around him. It is this that lives forever; and the future happiness of the soul is inseparably connected with its redemption and purification. With what interest, then, ought we to enter upon the

contemplation of truths, which bring to light the means of constituting the soul, the habitation of everlasting peace.

The volume that contains these momentous disclosures, is composed of the books of the Old and New Testaments, written at "sundry times, and in divers places," by men divinely appointed for this express purpose. The canon of the Old Testament consists of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, (generally termed the five books of Moses,) Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. The canon of the New Testament consists of the gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, embracing the record of many events in the life of Christ and others, especially his immediate disciples, and containing besides, that system of doctrine which the Saviour taught whilst on earth. Then follows the Acts of the Apostles. These five books are strictly speaking, historical and doctrinal. Next are the Epistles, exclusively doctrinal, viz: The Epistles of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, (of which there are two,) Galatians, Ephesians, Phillipians, Colossians, Thessalonians, (two) Timothy, (two) Titus, Philemon, and Hebrews. Then comes the Epistle of James, the 1 and 2 of Peter, the 1, 2 and 3 of John, and that of Jude. And last the Revelation of St. John. (prophetical.)

We will not attempt to enter into an elaborate and systematic proof of the divine authority of the Sacred

Scriptures, as it would be remote from our present object. Though it may be well to state, that the enemies of revealed truth have never been able, with all their sophistry and cunning, to invalidate the testimony which goes to establish the belief in the mind of the candid inquirer, that the Bible is a divine revelation.

a. The writers of the New Testament, *could have been influenced by no conceivable motive, to impose upon the credulity of mankind*, for their efforts to disseminate their peculiar opinions, exposed them to poverty, persecution, and death. If what they relate is untrue, they must have been deceived themselves; but this could not have been the case, because they were eye witnesses to the mighty works of Christ, the certain evidences of his exalted character; and they were well aware, that a Being so eminently distinguished by every estimable quality, and who possessed every opportunity of knowing the truth, could not deceive them either voluntarily, or without design. But if the records of the Evangelists are true, then all the other writings of the New Testament are equally so, for we learn in the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke, that the apostles were filled with the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, and as inspired men, they were of course taught directly from above, in regard to all the doctrines they proclaimed. By this simple process of reasoning we arrive at the conclusion that the Gospel is *authentic* in its historical details, and of *divine origin* in reference to its doctrines.

The books of the Old Testament are equally deserving our regard as a divine revelation, for they received the sanction of the Messiah himself. He says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I

am not come to destroy but to fulfil." (Matth. v. 17.) It is worthy of remark here, that the term "the law or the prophets," employed on this occasion, was the popular expression, when speaking of the whole canon. And the testimony of the apostle Peter is not less decisive: "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." (2 Peter, i. 21.)

b. Indeed, the *miracles* which many of the sacred writers performed, as well as the *prophecies* they uttered—the most important of which, have been fulfilled in Christ—establish beyond a doubt the divine authority of the Scriptures.

c. And besides, there is a species of *internal* evidence which adds materially to the weight of testimony in favor of the Old and New Testament being a divine revelation; we allude to the perfect and uninterrupted consistency of all its parts. Every revealed doctrine of the Bible, in as far as it is comprehensible to the human understanding, will be found but a link in the grand chain of systematic truth, whilst there is a perfect agreement between its historical records, in every essential particular.

d. There is another species of evidence in favor of the Christian religion which we feel bound to notice, as it accumulates every day, and is in itself eminently important. We mean *the triumph of its principles over every other*, and the care exercised over it by a superintending power. Whilst the foundations of human systems of religious opinion have been undermined, the religion of Christ is extending its influence wider and wider, and promises, by the aid of proper effort, soon to sway the whole moral creation on earth, with its gentle

purifying power. Even in the dark ages, when its glory seemed to be extinct, the spark that was again to fire the spirit of candid investigation, glowed faintly amid monastic seclusion. And in the sixteenth century, the light of truth, penetrating with its rays the lurid mass of superstition and error that had so long obscured it, again beamed forth in cloudless splendor. Since that period its progress has been onward; laying bare the abuses of the Romish Church; casting pagan idols from their shrines; and threatening at this moment, to expose the delusion of Mohammedan faith, and enlighten the benighted minds of its zealous defenders. In a word, the splendid triumphs of Christianity lead us to believe that "The gates of hell will not prevail against it."

e. The divine origin of the religion of Christ is further evident from *its influence on the world*. It improves the moral condition of mankind, and purifies that heart which is the home of every degrading and unholy passion. It refines the pleasures of human intercourse, and creates in the mind of every individual who is subdued by its power, and yields to its requirements, an abiding interest in the present and eternal welfare of those around him. In the full and unresisted exercise of its authority, it scatters the blessings of peace, and forbids the tumult of war, and the discord of civil dissension. It gives a delightful character to the laws and customs of nations; elevates woman to her legitimate station in society; converts the fierceness of uncivilized man into the gentleness of the dove; tempers the thousand ills and vicissitudes of life; breathes into the poor man's heart the spirit of resignation; breaks down all those distinctions of human character that are not sustained by virtue; and inspires the soul with the hope of immortality.

f. Another evidence of the divine origin of the gospel, is the constant fulfillment of its prophetic declarations, Hence you perceive, my young friends, the necessity of becoming acquainted with principles so eminently advantageous in their practical influence, and enjoying the sanction of heaven. The diligent and faithful study of that blessed volume, in which these principles are set forth, will lead you to the fountain of truth, wisdom, and happiness. You will there discover the chief good of the soul, as well as the certain means of its attainment. You will be brought to feel your own guilt as moral beings, and to admire that plan of redeeming grace, where "mercy and truth have met together."

The catechism you hold in your hand, arranged by the great and pious Luther, contains all the knowledge essential to guide man to heaven, and is used as a text book by the ministers of our church, in explaining to the young the sublime doctrines of revelation. It consists of five parts. I. The ten commandments. II. The apostolic creed, or articles of the Christian faith. III. The Lord's prayer. IV. The sacrament of Baptism. V. The sacrament of the Lord's supper. And then follows a brief, systematic analysis of the principles of the Christian religion.

The study of this volume is not to supercede the diligent reading of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament; for as you become interested in the great truths here laid down, you will necessarily have recourse to the writings whence they are derived, for proof of their correctness, and illustration of their meaning; and especially to peruse the interesting history of those eminent characters who proclaimed them—the Prophets—

Christ, and his Apostles. Human creeds and expositions may be wrong; but the oracles of God are a sufficient and the only rule of faith and practice, and on this foundation our hopes must rest to be firm and steadfast. It is the object of catechetical instruction to excite such an interest in the disclosures of revealed truth, as will lead you to the source of correct spiritual knowledge—the Bible itself. If this object is not gained, it fails to accomplish its only legitimate end.

II. The next point of consideration is *the manner* in which this duty of searching the Scriptures must be performed, to promote and secure the lasting welfare of the soul.

1. It is essential that you enter upon the discharge of this duty with a *teachable disposition*. This disposition must be formed immediately by the spirit of God, and mediately, by a sense of the utter impossibility of our obtaining the knowledge most essential to the peace and purity of the soul, without a divine revelation. The history of the human mind illustrates the very limited range of its capacities. The most renowned of the heathen philosophers, who were rapt in the contemplation of spiritual things, acknowledged the necessity of a revelation from heaven, and left the world without the certain hope of immortality. We may infer from the works of nature that the Creator is distinguished by wisdom and power; but the light of nature does not reveal the infinite love of God, as displayed in the gift of his own Son. The glorious doctrine of Atonement is peculiar to the gospel, as well as all those interesting disclosures, on which the hopes of man, as an immortal being, are based. The depraved condition of the soul; the fall

of man from a state of innocence; the necessity of an offering for sin; the tri-unity of God; the efficacy of prayer; and many other truths equally important, were never dreamt of, in the sublimest reveries of the human mind, until the light of divine revelation shed its beams upon the intellectual world. These considerations should make us willing to be taught from above. With a child-like confidence we should open the volume of inspiration, and drink in those rich streams of spiritual knowledge, which it abundantly supplies. For it is the only guide to happiness. Without it, we are like the mariner who floats upon the trackless ocean, without a compass or a star to direct him in his course; and even with it we may be lost, if we suffer the pride, or prejudice of our nature, to reject its humiliating truths.

But you ask: Is not this filial disposition to be formed by the spirit of God? I answer, yes—for without its influence the enmity of the natural heart cannot be overcome. We dare not speculate on the mysteriousness of its gracious operations; but it is certain, that every hearer and reader of the word may be savingly benefited by the knowledge he acquires. There is therefore nothing to discourage the hope, if indulged, that such a state of mind, as is essential to just impressions of duty, may be attained. You may yield to the perverseness of your own hearts, or the pleasures of sin, even after your religious obligations have been plainly stated, and as plainly understood; but this is an evidence that you have *resisted* the Holy Ghost, rather than a proof that you have never felt its power. If the seed that is sown brings forth no fruit, it is not because the rain refuses to descend, and the sun to shine upon it; it is choked by

them, or there is no depth of soil, and hence it withers and dies. When the seed of instruction is scattered in the human heart, the genial influence of the spirit is there to quicken and bring it into life, and if the young twig withers before the lovely fruits of piety appear, either the soil is barren, or the tender plant is choked by the cares and pleasures of the world. Do you wish to approach the sacred oracles with a child-like confidence, only yield to that influence which the spirit of God is waiting to exert. There is a time, it is true, when the power of the spirit is no longer felt, but this only in cases which have been rendered hopeless by a long resistance to its divine energy. If you sincerely desire to enter upon the study of the word of God, to seek your own salvation, you have every reason to look for aid from above, in the cultivation of such a state of mind as will materially contribute to render the truths of the gospel "a savour of life unto life" to your souls.

2. But you are likewise to engage in this important duty in a *spirit of prayer*. The blessings of Providence, it is true, are scattered indiscriminately, and the operation of the laws of nature, established by the Creator, is calculated to affect the happiness of all alike; for "he sends his rain on the just and on the unjust." But you are not to expect the enlightening influences of the holy spirit without asking them. The *necessity* of the spirit's aid in the profitable investigation of divine truth will appear, if you take into consideration the fact, that you have often perused the gospel without feeling the least interest in its details, and that millions of our race have enjoyed its light, whilst their moral characters have remained unchanged. You must ever bear in mind,

that your desires and inclinations are opposed to the will of heaven ; that the natural man, or the unregenerate heart is at enmity with God ; that it is not subject to his law, and that consequently, if you are to be benefited by the study of the divine will, this unfortunate bias of the mind, which we all inherit as the sons and daughters of Adam, must be overcome by some powerful influence. This influence, so effectual in subduing the prejudices of the human heart against the doctrines of revealed truth, we are taught to believe, is the Holy Ghost.

The plain declarations of Scripture also lead us to infer that unless our understandings are enlightened from above, the mere perusal of the word of life will avail us nothing. The Bible is called "the Sword of the Spirit." To be effectual, therefore, it must be wielded by that spirit whose instrument it is. Without this accompanying influence, you may be induced to admire the morality of the gospel, the forgiveness and benevolence it inculcates, but you can never be brought to feel your depraved condition as moral beings, and the necessity of a change of moral character, before you can dwell in the presence of a holy God. Without this accompanying influence you will never be willing to devote your best services to him who has said, "My son, give me thy heart."

That the enlightening influences of the spirit *are granted in answer to prayer*, is a truth which we have every reason to believe. It is established, not only by the experience of every Christian, but also by the authority of divine revelation. "If any of you lack wisdom," says St. James, "let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be

given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering." The wisdom here spoken of, is the wisdom conveyed to the mind through the gospel, and impressed upon the understanding by the spirit of truth; it is that saving knowledge of ourselves and the will of the Creator, which leads us to "make our calling and election sure." If then, my young friends, you desire to be thus eternally benefited by the study of the sacred Scriptures in which you are now engaged, you must offer up a fervent petition, whenever you enter upon the discharge of this solemn duty, to that Being who is the fountain of knowledge and wisdom, and who is able and willing to enlighten and instruct the children of men in the way of his commandments. If you cultivate and cherish this spirit of humble dependence on the aid of your heavenly Father, you will not be doomed to read the Bible in vain. You will find it sharper than any two-edged sword. It will bring to light your own sinfulness, as well as the danger to which your moral guilt has exposed you; and, by the administration of its cheering promises, it will gently constrain you to bow before the cross of a crucified Redeemer, there to make an offering of your services and your hearts to him. Be persuaded, then, never to open the leaves of the sacred volume, nor to enter the sanctuary of God, without first seeking that aid from above which is indispensably essential to your spiritual improvement, to the acquisition of that saving knowledge, which will guide you in the way of life. Father! give me thy spirit! should be the humble, yet confident petition of every inquiring soul.

3. It is essential that you enter upon the study of the sacred Scriptures, *determined to practice every new*

duty you discover. The gospel is intended to lead you in the path of duty, for this only is the path of peace. I do not say that you can perform, unaided, the will of the Almighty. And yet, that you have much to do, and that your salvation depends upon your own efforts, is plainly taught in the volume of inspiration. "Come unto me," says the Saviour. If, then, you are sensible of your own weakness and inability as moral beings, resolve that you will discharge every obligation revealed to you, *in the strength of the Lord.* You can do all things through Christ. Whilst, therefore, you look habitually to him for assistance, employ your own efforts with diligence, and he will render these efforts successful. He will enable you to repent and be humble, to resist temptation, and to let the light of your example shine before the world.

4. Again: *You must be ever mindful that the doctrines of the Bible are the doctrines of inspiration;* and that, as such, they are to be understood in their obvious meaning, and not construed, so as to favor the prejudices and sinfulness of the human heart. "The Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Christ declares, in reference to the grand system of gospel truth, "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen;" (John, iii. 11.) When the apostles were commanded by the elders of Israel to teach no longer in the name of Jesus, "Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard;" (Acts, iv. 19, 20.)—

And in relation to the guilt of attaching any other signification to the disclosures of eternal truth, than that which they plainly bear, St. John has declared in the book of revelation, "I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, if any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book; and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life;" (Rev. xxii. 18, 19.) Many persons, erroneously supposing one system of belief as good as another, in as far as the final happiness of the soul is concerned, have rejected all the essential doctrines of the gospel, and adopted others better suited to their own sinful inclinations, to which the gospel is opposed. When it is said: "He that believeth shall be saved," the salvation of the soul is promised as the result of a particular kind of faith. Were it not so, the infidel would be as safe, and as sure of everlasting enjoyment as the most devoted Christian; for even the Atheist *believes* that there is no God—nay, the very devils believe, and tremble. As it is evident, then, that the Saviour alludes to a species of faith as the ground of divine approbation, essentially distinguished from every other, it is equally plain, that this saving faith can be nothing else than the willing assent of the mind to the fundamental principles of the Bible, and the constant exhibition of the influence of these principles, in a life of devotedness to the will of the Almighty. But if you cultivate a child-like disposition, and study the sacred writings in a spirit of prayer, there is but little danger that you will be led to reject any doctrine which the gospel reveals. It is, however,

important that you should be warned against the pernicious sentiment, which in the present age seems to be gaining ground, that it is a matter of little moment *what* we believe, if we are only *honest* in the opinions we entertain.

5. Finally : Let it be remembered, that *in searching the Scriptures you are in pursuit of eternal life*, of a crown of glory that fadeth not away, and a place at the right hand of God forever. The religion of Christ cannot be estimated too highly as enriching the pleasures of social intercourse, spreading the blessings of civilization, and imparting a delightful character to human government. But its chief recommendation consists in its being the grand scheme of redeeming mercy, revealed by the Creator to his rebellious offspring. It places life and immortality in a clear light ; it displays how the forfeited happiness of man may be restored to him, without doing violence to any of the attributes of the divine character, and establishes the Christian's hope of future felicity on a sure basis. It opens the door of mercy to every soul. Its provisions and promises are adapted to men of all conditions, and in every circumstance of life. It aims to restore all to that elevation of moral purity and spiritual happiness, from which our guilty race has fallen ; the poor as well as the rich, the unlearned as well as the learned, the slave as well as his master. It exhibits the condescension of Deity. It assures us that when the Saviour came into our sinful world, "God was made manifest in the flesh." It relates the heart-thrilling scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary. It points to the cross and the Lamb of God ex-

tended upon it, making atonement for human guilt, by his own vicarious sufferings and death.

“ Behold the man! though scorn'd below,
He bears the greatest name above;
The angels at his footstool bow,
And all his royal claims approve.

We can regard the volume of inspiration then in no other light than as the guide of the soul to heaven. It begins with the history of the Creation and fall of man; declares that the promise of a future deliverer was given to our first parents; displays the deep interest which the Creator felt in human affairs, when he raised up a peculiar people, through whom he transmitted the record of his purposes to future generations; and contains the history of the sufferings, death, and triumphant resurrection, and glorious ascension of the long expected Messiah.

You, my young friends, are about to commence the study of that blessed book, which contains these interesting disclosures; and need I add to what has already been said, that they ought to be of unspeakable interest to *you*? If you enter upon the discharge of this duty with a child-like and a prayerful disposition, and cherish continually a sense of its importance, you will soon be persuaded, that you are solemnly obligated, to confirm, or ratify the promises, made in your behalf, at your baptism, by a public profession of faith. You will know by happy experience, that the service of God affords a richer enjoyment to the soul, than the guilty pleasures of the world. Remember, that your duty does not consist in the mere repetition of words, but that

you are to treasure up in your hearts, the solemn lessons of inspired truth. You are to make the Bible your study in reference to your own salvation. You are to discover what constitutes the Christian character. You are to learn what duties belong to you in your relation to God and your fellow-men. And you are to pray without ceasing, for the enlightening aid of the holy spirit, that the attainment of this knowledge may be followed by the dedication of yourselves to the service of the Almighty.

CATECHUMEN'S GUIDE.

The following lectures will consist, as the reader is already aware, of brief explanations of the doctrines of Scripture, as they are laid down in Luther's Catechism—doctrines touching the duties which man owes to the Creator, to his fellow-men and himself; together with a practical application, shewing that all men are bound by the most solemn obligations, to act a very important part as moral beings. And may the Spirit of the Highest guide us in this momentous inquiry, and indelibly impress upon our understandings, by his sanctifying influence these illustrations of revealed truth.

PAR'T FIRST.

The first part of the Catechism, as you perceive, includes the ten commandments—and the inquiry that presents itself, before entering upon the explanation of these commandments, is, by whom were they communicated, and what is the character of that Being whose will they contain?

Q. What does the first part of the Catechism contain? By whom were these communicated?

The existence of a God, the Creator and Governor of the universe, is the fundamental doctrine of our blessed religion. This truth is plainly taught in the works of Nature, which indicate, so clearly, contrivance and design, that we are compelled to attribute them to an intelligent creating cause. And besides, we discover in the greatness of these works, the mighty power of Him who formed them, whilst their manifest adaptation to some important and glorious end, bespeaks the wisdom of their author. But it has been reserved for revelation to teach us more respecting the divine character and intentions than the light of nature ever has, or ever could disclose. The Bible declares this God, whose existence is proclaimed by every object of creation, to be *infinite*, not only in power and wisdom, but in goodness, justice, holiness and truth. According to the testimony of this blessed book, he not only exists, but is uncreated and omnipresent. He is also a spirit, and therefore requires a spiritual worship. Let us briefly attend to

The Divine Perfections.

1. *Eternity.* The Bible represents the divine existence as without beginning, and declares that it will be without end. This includes the doctrine of self-existence, for all created things must have a beginning. "Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting thou art God."—(Ps. xc. 2.)

Q. Does Nature teach us that there is a God? With no other light than that of nature to guide us, what attributes may we ascribe to the Divine Being? **Ans.** Power, wisdom, and goodness. **Q.** Why is the light of revelation preferable to that of nature? **Mention the divine perfections.** What do you mean by his Eternity? What other doctrine does this include?

2. *Immutability.* The Scriptures represent God as unchangeable. He is the same to-day, yesterday and forever. He is the same, or unchangeable in his *nature*. The lofty perfections of his adorable character cannot change. "He is the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—(James i. 17.)

Hence the divine *purposes* are equally immutable. Whatever the great Eternal decrees must come to pass. He is true to all his promises, and every expectation of good that has been created by these promises, may be safely indulged. "He is not a man, that he should repent."—(1 Sam. xv. 29.)

3. *Omnipresence.* We are also taught, that this God, who is self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable, is present every where at the very same moment of time. This attribute of his character is indeed essential to the exercise of his providential care, as well as to his moral government. The very fact, that all created things are sustained in existence by his hand, is satisfactory evidence that he pervades all nature. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."—(Ps. cxxxix. 7, 10.) It is

Q. What do you understand by the immutability of God? If the Divine nature is unchangeable, are not the Divine purposes and promises equally so? What do you understand by the Omnipresence of Deity? Of what are the arrangements of Divine Providence a proof? Is the Divine Omnipresence essential to the moral government of God? Mention a passage of Scripture to prove the doctrine.

impossible for us to explain or conceive the manner in which the divine agency is thus universally exercised; nor is it necessary to the belief of the doctrine that we should. Its incomprehensibility is no argument against its truth; for let it be remembered that God is a *spirit*, and who can comprehend the spiritual nature of man himself? Who can describe the essence of the human soul, or explain the manner of its existence?

4. *Omniscience.* If God is present every where, it clearly follows that he must possess the knowledge of all events, and that this knowledge must extend to the most secret thoughts of the human heart. It is a solemn reflection that the Being on whom we depend for life and all its blessings, as well as the hope of immortality, can enter into the deepest recesses of the soul, and there read the very motives that actuate us. But it is also, to the believer, an abiding source of the richest consolation. Are the righteous persecuted for righteousness sake, God is the witness of all their trials, and theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Does the church languish, "God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; he will help her, and that right early." This attribute of the divine character is referred to by the Psalmist in the 139th Psalm. "O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my down sitting and mine up rising; thou understandest my thought afar off."

Omnipotence. We learn from the works of nature

Q. Is its incomprehensibility opposed to its truth? What do you understand by the Divine Omniscience? Is God acquainted with the very motives of human action? What influence should this have upon all moral and accountable beings? With what feelings should every believer regard this attribute? In what Psalm is it referred to? Repeat the passage.

Omnipotence. We learn from the works of nature that the power of God is beyond conception great. He created all things out of nothing. He gave existence, not only to the form of the world, but to the matter of which it is composed. He said: "Let there be light, and there was light." (Gen. i. 3.) Nature, however, in as far as we can comprehend it, affords no positive proof that its author is Omnipotent. But here, as ever, the Bible comes to our aid, and assures us that "nothing is impossible with God."—(Luke, i. 37. Gen. xviii. 14. Rom. iv. 18, 21.)

Justice. The divine Being has given certain laws to men, whose observance is perfectly consistent with, and indispensable to, the highest state of enjoyment of which the human soul is susceptible. Even conscience assures us of a future retribution, and that happiness is the reward of virtue, and misery the punishment of vice. But obedience to the moral law of God constitutes virtue in the strictest and highest sense, and the impartial administration of this law, which secures the greatest possible degree of enjoyment to the intelligent universe, is denominated Justice. Though there is much misery in the world, and though the best and most exemplary among men are often oppressed and afflicted, this is no argument against a doctrine, whose truth, conscience and revelation combine to establish. The day will come when all men will be judged according to their works. "And will not God avenge his own elect, who cry un-

Q. What do you understand by Omnipotence? What do the works of nature prove in reference to the Divine power? Do they prove that God is omnipotent? What does prove it? What do you understand by Justice? Will God most certainly administer justice?

to him day and night? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily.”—(Luke, xviii. 7, 8. Psalm x. Rom. ii. 11. Gen. xviii. 25. 2 Cor. v. 10.) “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.”

Holiness. This attribute of the divine character is intimately associated with the one just described. For it is evident, that a Being whose law requires holiness in others, must be holy himself. That is, he loves all moral excellence and every kind and degree of virtuous attainment, whilst he hates every exhibition of moral depravity, which is called Sin. It is the object of the moral law to promote the former, and prevent the latter. This attribute is alluded to in the first epistle general of Peter, i. 16: “Be ye holy, for I am holy.”—(Eph. iv. 24. Matt. v. 48. 2 Peter, i. 4. Deut. xxxii. 4. James, i. 13.

Veracity. The infinite justice, holiness, wisdom, and consequent immutability of God, lead us to place unlimited confidence in all his promises, and to believe that he will eventually accomplish all his high and glorious purposes. The divine justice and holiness require that men should will and act in conformity with the moral law, and the infinite love of the Almighty is also interested in the harmony of the moral universe; that is, in the obedience of all his intelligent creation, which obedience is perfectly consistent with, and indispensable to, the highest degree of happiness attainable by the soul. But the divine wisdom has seen fit to attach a penalty

Q. Where will this justice be fully manifest? A. In Eternity. Where must all men eventually appear? What is Holiness? A. Perfect conformity to the divine law. What do you understand by the veracity of God?

to disobedience, and the promise of reward to obedience, to secure this moral harmony. And as all the attributes of the character of God are perfect, and as his determinations and arrangements are, consequently, not subject to alteration, we have every reason to believe, that the promises and threatenings of his word will be fulfilled, and that every expectation which he has created will be realized. "Let God be true, but every man a liar."—(Rom. iii. 4.) "The Strength of Israel will not lie nor repent: for he is not a man, that he should repent."—(1 Sam. xv. 29. John, iii. 33. Heb. vi. 18. James, i. 17. Mal. iii. 6.

Goodness. All the works of nature, and all the arrangements of the material world, so evidently adapted to supply the temporal wants, and promote the happiness of man, point out to us this attribute of the divine character. Nor is this at variance with the fact, that we often meet with afflictions in our present state of existence. For these are themselves the dispensations of a wise and merciful Providence, and are intended to lead to some important and blessed result. But the system of atonement, established to promote the everlasting interests of the immortal soul, and the gift of his own son, who was appointed to die for our guilty race, afford irresistible evidence that GOD IS LOVE, and that he has ever entertained for man the most ardent and disinterested affection. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son."—(1 Tim. vi. 17. Psalm ciii. 13. Matt. vii. 9, 10.)

Q. From what do we learn that God is good? Are afflictions opposed to this doctrine? In what light are we to consider these? What affords still more cheering evidence of the love of God than the works of nature and the arrangements of Providence?

Incomparability. In all these attributes of character, God is infinitely and therefore incomparably and inconceivably great. He is infinite in power, knowledge, justice, holiness, truth, and goodness; and these perfections of the Almighty exalt him far above all created intelligences.—(1 Tim. vi. 16. Isaiah, xl. 25.

Such is the character of the Being who has given to man a moral law; and his right to govern the moral universe grows out of the very relation he sustains to it, as the Creator and upholder of all things that exist.

The delivery of the Law.

The account given by Moses of the occasion on which the ten commandments were delivered to the children of Israel, serves to show the importance attached to them by that Divine Being who revealed them. After the Israelites in their journey from Egypt had proceeded as far as Mount Horeb or Sinai, the place where Moses had been commanded to go to Pharoah and demand the freedom of his nation, they pitched their tents, and here God entered into a solemn covenant with his people. The account of this interesting event is thus given by M. Gleig: "On a certain day, the Israelites, who had been forewarned of what was to happen, beheld the mountain enveloped in clouds of smoke, from which vivid flashes of lightning from time to time burst forth,

Q. Is God to be compared with any other being? In what is he infinite? Is there any other infinite being? What do you understand by the term infinite? What by the term finite? Why has God a right to govern the moral universe? Where do we find the account of the delivery of the ten commandments, or moral law? With the history of what nation is this circumstance more particularly connected?

whilst awful thunderings shook the rocks to their foundations, and filled the hearts of all who heard them with dismay. In the midst of this tumult, the whole congregation was removed to a certain line, drawn regularly round the base of the hill, where men, women, and children prostrated themselves upon the earth, in fearful expectation of what was to follow. In a few moments a trumpet began to sound, increasing in its blasts till it rang throughout the desert; the thunders grew more and more terrible, till suddenly all was hushed, and the voice of God was heard, clear and distinct, issuing from the midst of the smoke."

"It delivered audibly those ten commandments, which may be said to comprise a summary of the Jewish moral code; as they undeniably embrace the substance of all that natural religion teaches of man's duty towards his maker and his neighbour." But although the Israelites were for a time sensibly impressed with the awful solemnity of this scene, the impression soon wore away, and the outbreakings of a rebellious spirit, so often visible since their departure from Egypt, were again displayed. Alarmed at the protracted absence of Moses, who had gone into the mountain, to receive a fuller revelation of the will of Jehovah, in regard to his covenant people, they desired Aaron to make them a golden calf, and when he at length yielded to their request, they fell down before this senseless idol, and thus became guilty of the violation of the first commandment. When Moses descended from the mountain and entered the camp, he was so incensed at what he saw and heard, that in the excitement of the moment he threw the tables of stone, (on which were written the ten commandments,) upon the ground, and broke them in pieces.

For this sinful, degrading act, the people were severely chastised by the Almighty, though at the intercession of Moses they were saved from total extermination. Again Moses went up into the mountain at the command of Jehovah, and again he remained there forty days and forty nights, and once more "were the ten commandments, written with the finger of God on two tables of stone, committed to his charge. With these, as well as with fresh instructions touching the observance of the Sabbath, and an abstinence from idolatry, God sent him down to the congregation; and such was the halo shed around him, that for some time after his return, no man could look upon his countenance unveiled."

The injunctions delivered to mankind in the primitive age of the world, were, probably, simple in the extreme. As in a state of innocence, our first parents were required not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so after the fall, they may have been commanded to love their God supremely, and to be kind and affectionate in their intercourse with each other. In fact, the ten commandments are only intended to enforce this duty of love to God and love to man. And we are to consider them in no other light than as ramifications of those two sublime precepts: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself," as applied to the various cases of human conduct, in which the important relations of man, as a religious and social being, are apt to be forgotten. We have the testimony of Christ himself to bear us out in this assertion, for he says: "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

Laws in general.

When we speak of laws, we refer to those rules or principles of action established by competent authority, to regulate the conduct of free agents. They may be divided into *positive* and *negative*; the former requiring the discharge of duty, the latter prohibiting every species of conduct that does not tend to promote the general good. God alone possesses the original right of establishing laws here on earth, though he has delegated this right to others. Thus parents have authority over their own children; servants are expected to render obedience to their masters, and legislators are empowered to regulate the government of nations. All human laws, however, to be *strictly* legal, that is to be legal in a moral, which is the highest sense, must be based on the law of God, else they are not binding on man as a moral being. Thus, though persecution, cruelty and idolatry may become legalized in one sense, they can never become so in another. Though they may be perfectly consistent with the policy of nations, they cannot be consistent with the moral law of the Creator.

The Ten Commandments.

These commandments are recorded in the twentieth chapter of Exodus, as well as the fifth of Deuteronomy. They are called "*the Law*," and are eminently distinguished as the standard of all virtuous conduct, and as the basis of all those just and upright regulations which

Q. What are laws? How divided? Who possess the right of giving laws? What ought to be the basis of all human laws? Are human laws obligatory, if opposed to the law of God? Where are the ten commandments recorded? What do we call the ten commandments?

serve to secure harmony in civil community, and promote happiness in social intercourse. As Harnisch expresses it, 'they contain the *kernel* of all the divine laws.' This law is denominated *holy*—1. In reference to its divine author. 2. In reference to its contents, and 3. In reference to its design. The ten commandments are generally divided into the first and second tables. The first three commandments, comprising the first table, relate to the duty we owe our Creator—the last seven, which belong to the second table, have reference to the duty we owe our fellows. They are also divided into positive and negative. The third and fourth, which are positive, mark out a certain course of conduct to be pursued—the rest, which are negative, prohibit certain actions, morally wrong.

Though the *ceremonial* law has been annulled, without a question, under the new dispensation, having fully answered the purpose for which it was originally given to the Jews, yet there can be as little doubt that the *moral* law is binding on every member of the Church of Christ. For the Redeemer himself gives it his sanction when he says: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I came not to destroy, but to fulfil;" or, as the original word may be more appropriately rendered, to ratify, or establish. And besides, he has illustrated the meaning of the moral law, and plainly enforced obedience to its precepts in his sermon on the mount. (Matt. v. vi. vii.) It is true Christ did not give

Q. Why are they denominated holy? How are they generally divided? Which of the commandments are requirements? Which prohibitions? Are the commandments binding on Christians as well as Jews? What law has been annulled? Where did the Saviour state particularly the manner in which the ten commandments are to be observed?

to the moral law its popular interpretation. He raised the standard of moral obligation, and taught in opposition to prevailing sentiment, that injuries and private wrongs were not to be avenged, and that the spirit of the law demanded the exercise of long-suffering and forbearance. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."—(Matt. v. 38, 39.) The sum and essence of the ten commandments are, love to God and love to man. To enforce this duty of giving our best affections to the Creator, and of promoting to the extent of our power, the present and eternal happiness of our fellow beings, is the grand object of the whole moral code. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment; and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. xxii. 37, 40.) Hence, Luther begins the explanation of each commandment with the phrase: "We should so love and fear God." Obedience to the divine law should therefore spring—

1. From *motives of affection*. We should so *love* God as to walk in the way of his commandments. We should love him in view of the loveliness of his character; his lofty and adorable perfections. We should also love him in view of his goodness, displayed in our creation, in

Q. How did the obedience which he required differ from what the Jews in his day considered the fulfilment of the law? What are the sum and essence of the ten commandments? From what must our obedience spring?

our preservation, and especially in our Redemption. (1 John, iv. 19.) Feelings of gratitude should induce us to obey the will of our heavenly Father. If the love of God is thus shed abroad in our hearts, it is evident, from the testimony of Christ himself, that it will be our delight to pursue the path of moral duty. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." (1 John, v. 3.)

2. Obedience to the divine law should also spring from *fear*. Not that emotion of dread, experienced by the slave, whenever he thinks of the cruel inflictions of his task-master, and which is entirely incompatible with every feeling of affection; but that reverence which we entertain toward the great and the good, and which leads us to respect their will, and to fear their disapprobation. The Almighty stands to us in the relation of our best friend. All his requirements are just and pure. His government is administered with the plainest reference to our happiness in both worlds. And it should therefore be our wish to abstain from the wilful violation of his laws, lest we incur his displeasure, and be deprived of his friendship forever. (Prov. xiv. 2.)

It is a truth, established on evidence which no believer in revelation will attempt to controvert, that even *the heathens* are not absolved from the discharge of moral duty. The proof of the divine existence and power are exhibited in all the works of Creation. (Rom. i. 19, 20.) And besides, "they have a law written within their hearts." And this law, namely, the voice of conscience, has been implanted within them, to suggest to their

Q. What reason have we to love God? How should we fear him? Do the heathens possess any law? And what? Have we any proof of this in the Bible? And where?

minds those principles of action, on which the moral law of God is based. Indeed, satisfactory proof is afforded in their own moral history, that they are able to discriminate between virtue and vice, and know the difference between good and evil. (Rom. ii. 14, 15.)

The Punishment of Disobedience.

To every law there is attached a penalty. And in case of violation, this penalty is imposed by the individual who has established the law, or by those who have been appointed to pass judgment on offenders. Thus, the parent prescribes certain rules of conduct for his child, and in case of disobedience, he inflicts the punishment. And thus magistrates are invested with authority to punish offenders against the laws of their country.

But the Judge of all men is God himself. And his judgment is the more worthy of attention, inasmuch as from it there will be no appeal. (Isaiah, xxxiii. 22.) "There is one Lawgiver who is able to save and to destroy." (James, iv. 12.) The nature of this judgment in the case of particular nations and individuals, will depend on the nature of the law given to each. 1. The heathens will be judged according to that law which tells them that there is a God; that God is the author of every source of happiness they possess; that the soul is immortal; and that virtue and purity of heart are alone pleasing to the Almighty. 2. The Jews, according to what Moses and the prophets wrote. 3. They who

Q. Is the violation of the law punished? By whom is punishment inflicted? Who will judge all men? According to what law? Who will be considered most guilty in the sight of God?

live in Christian lands, according to all that is contained in the books of the Old and New Testament. Hence it follows, that the divine displeasure will fall heaviest upon those, who enjoy the light of *Gospel* truth, and yet refuse to consecrate their services to God. This principle is plainly recognized and established in the divine word. "And that servant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required. (Luke, xii. 47, 48.)

In view of the heavy weight of responsibility imposed upon him, it should be the Christian's desire and petition that God himself, would make him willing, and endow him with strength to love and serve Him. For it is certain, that the believer brings with him into the world no inherent taste for the enjoyments of piety, (1 Cor. ii. 14,) and that all the moral energy he possesses, is the gift of the divine spirit—"Being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xv. 16.)

You are to regard the commandments then, which constitute the moral law of God, as the rule of your life. Your supreme affections are to be placed upon the Creator, and you are to feel interested in the present and eternal welfare of those around you. Obedience to these precepts will secure to you the divine approbation, but if you despise them you must expect to suffer the fearful

Q. How can you prove this? In view of moral duty what should be the believer's prayer? In what light are you to regard the ten commandments? Is self-love inconsistent with moral duty?

penalty of sin. Let it be remembered however that *self love* is not prohibited. For the means of promoting our individual happiness are scattered profusely around us, and the diligent use of these means, is prompted by that desire, which has been implanted in the heart by the benevolent Creator. And besides, our individual happiness in the eternal world is presented as one motive of becoming the followers of Christ. Indeed, the love which we entertain for ourselves, is to regulate our conduct in our intercourse with our fellow men, and the believer is commanded to cherish the same degree of interest in the welfare of others, which he feels for his own. (Matt. xxii. 39.)

But when the principle of *self-love* degenerates into *selfishness*, when it becomes all-absorbing, and leaves no room for the exercise of benevolence to man and love to God, it meets the unqualified disapprobation of the divine mind. The duties imposed by the law of God may be classed thus: 1. Religious. 2. Personal. 3. Social. The first are to be considered paramount to all others; the second and third are alike important, but the neglect of any one is totally inconsistent with moral obligation.

Results of Obedience.

The advantages secured by obedience to the moral law may be enumerated as follows:

1. The peace of community. Were all actuated by the principle of love to God and man, acts of injustice would be no longer repeated, feelings of enmity would

Q. Is selfishness inconsistent with moral duty? What do you understand by selfishness? How may our duties be classed? Which are paramount? Can any one be consistently neglected?

cease to exist, and earth would bear a faint resemblance to heaven. Such will be the aspect of human society, and such the character of human intercourse, when every heart shall have paid homage to "the Lord of Hosts."

2. The approbation of conscience.

3. The approbation of God.

4. The salvation of the world. This grand object is to be secured—

a. By means of Christian example. "Let your light so shine before men that others, seeing your good works, may glorify your father which is in heaven." One of the best arguments in favor of Christianity is the power which it possesses to change the moral character, and subdue the guilty passions of the heart. When the believer exhibits this moral change in his conduct, the attention of the sinner is frequently arrested, and thus Christian example becomes instrumental in his conversion to truth. This position may be best illustrated by a fact. A certain individual employed every means in his power to conciliate the feelings of his bitter enemy, but all to no purpose. As he was one day passing along the road, he observed that the cattle were in his neighbor's field, destroying the grain. Determined "not to be overcome of evil, but to overcome evil with good," he yielded at once to a sense of duty, entered the field, drove out the cattle, and labored to repair the fence, until every stone was properly adjusted, and the breach completely closed. The neighbor, who happened to witness the scene from his own dwelling, was deeply affected by this striking proof

Q. Enumerate the results of obedience. By what means is the salvation of the world to be effected? How are the purposes of God in regard to the salvation of the world to be advanced?

of forbearance; candidly acknowledged his fault, in cherishing feelings of enmity against the man who had done every thing to win his affections, and learned to admire that charity which "suffereth long, and is not easily provoked." Let such examples be multiplied, and the result in every case must be equally advantageous to the cause of truth.

b. The salvation of the world also depends upon Christian effort. Though the purposes of the Almighty are fixed and immutable, he has ever employed means for their accomplishment. The means of evangelizing the world, and of bringing all men to the knowledge of the truth, have been entrusted to the members of the church of Christ. Let every believer feel that interest in the spiritual improvement and happiness of others, which it is the object of the moral law to create, and our missionary and bible associations will be no longer cramped in their operations for want of adequate support. Let moral obligation be properly estimated in the church, and that auspicious day will be hastened, when the heathens shall have cast their idols to the "moles and the bats," and when holiness shall be inscribed on every heart.

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT.*

"I am the Lord thy God. Thou shalt have no other Gods before me. (Thou shalt not make unto thee any

* The arrangement of the ten commandments in Luther's Catechism, which differs from the more common one, was adopted by Augustin and others, and was generally received among the Jews, though rejected by

Q. Upon whom does the obligation of scattering the light of the gospel rest? What would be the result were every member of the church awake to a sense of duty? Repeat the first commandment.

graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them.”)

This commandment is briefly explained by Luther as teaching, that we should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

The lawgiver, as we have already seen, is Lord and God, the source of all good, and the upholder of all created things. He was thus manifested to the Israelites, when he conducted them safely from Egypt, made them triumphant over their enemies, and eventually placed them in possession of the promised land. And he thus manifests himself to all men in the works of nature, in the daily provision of their multiplied wants, and in all the wise and merciful arrangements of his providence.

That object may with propriety be denominated “*a God*” on which the best and warmest affections of the heart are placed. Thus wealth sometimes becomes the idol of the soul, and is emphatically styled in the language of Scripture, “the God of this world.” But it must be evident to every discerning mind, that He alone is truly God, who is the fountain of all our enjoyments.

Philo and Josephus. Though we can see no reason for separating into two commandments that part of the moral law which prohibits covetousness, and though with Dr. Harnisch, we prefer the other arrangement, which appears to us the most natural; yet, we also freely respond to the sentiment of the same writer, that it is a matter of very little consequence how they are divided, for according to either arrangement we have the very same precepts.

Q. How explained by Luther? Who is the lawgiver? To whom was he manifested as God when the law was given? How? To whom is he thus manifested now? How? What may be denominated “*a God*?” Who alone is true God?

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” (James, i. 17. Psalms, xvi. 5.)

Idolatry, or the worship of false gods is in this commandment expressly forbidden. And the necessity of such a commandment will appear, when we consider that the Israelites, even at the very time of the giving of the Law, betrayed a spirit of idolatry, when they petitioned the high priest, Aaron, to make them a golden calf. The same spirit was manifested during subsequent periods of their history, for instance, in the time of the Judges, as we read in 1 Sam. vii. 3, 4: “And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange Gods and Ashtaroath from among you, and prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines. Then the children of Israel did put away Baalim and Ashtaroath, and served the Lord only.” In the time of the Kings: “It came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other Gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father.” (1 Kings, xi. 4.)

False gods are denominated idols, and those who worship them are called pagans. The number of pagans has been estimated at 482,000,000; more by 82,000,000 than the remaining population of the world, including

Q. What is forbidden in this commandment? When did the Israelites manifest a spirit of Idolatry? What are false gods called? How do we name those who worship them? What is the number of pagans? By how many do they exceed the remaining population of the earth?

Mohammedans, Jews and Christians. The objects of their worship are—

1. Mountains and rocks.
2. Rivers and fountains.
3. Trees.
4. Animals : and even,
5. The productions of art, such as the arrow, and various utensils.
6. *Men*, celebrated as the benefactors of the human race, heroes, kings, etc.
7. The heavenly bodies, as the sun, moon and stars.
8. Higher beings, as spirits, or angels.

Hence images, formed to represent their gods, as well as to hold in perpetual remembrance, the names of celebrated men, have become among heathen nations objects of worship. (Jeremiah x. 2-6.)

It will not be out of place to state here, what is conceded by all Protestants, that the Church of Rome sanctions this idolatrous mode of worship. The members of that church pay their vows to the virgin Mary, and denominate her the mother of that God, who is self-existent and eternal, and consequently uncreated. Their prayers are offered to numberless saints. Their churches are filled with images of the virgin, of Christ, and of many departed worthies, before which they bow in direct violation of the first commandment.

The tendency of Paganism is almost too horrid to be conceived. In allusion to it Professor Tholuck remarks :

Q. Mention the objects of pagan worship. Is image worship common among them? Are there any professing Christians whose worship is opposed to the spirit of the first commandment? What is the tendency of paganism?

“When we consider that many millions of human beings have been and are still offered as sacrifices to the gods, we may well tremble. It remains perhaps to be shewn, that *all* pagans have sacrificed human victims; of the most of them however, it is true. The practice has existed among the most cultivated nations. Clemens Alexandrinus, among others, thus addresses the Greeks:— ‘Your Gods demand, like the pestilence passing through villages and cities, cruel and bloody offerings. Aristomenes the Messenian destroyed three hundred men in honor of Jupiter, and among them Theopompus king of the Lacedemonians. The Tauri are accustomed to sacrifice all strangers, who land through accident, or are driven by storm upon their coast, to the goddess Diana. Erechtheus the Attican, and the Roman Marius, sacrificed their own daughters.’”

But the *spirit* of idolatry is widely manifested among those who enjoy the light of divine revelation. For it is not necessary to the existence of this spirit that we sacrifice human victims, or professedly believe in a multiplicity of gods. Thus—

1. *Riches* often become the idol of the soul, and many pursue them as if they were the only, and the primitive source of all earthly good. This devotion to “the treasures of this world,” creates in the mind that forgetfulness of God which is the root of all idolatry. The wealth which the rich man amasses becomes in numberless instances the highest object of his love; its possession is

Q. What their sacrifices? Has the practice of offering human victims been confined to rude and uncultivated nations? Are there any other objects of idolatry? Mention one. When do riches become a god? Ans. When they are regarded as the chief good.

all that gives value to life in his eyes; its loss is the loss of enjoyment; and he confides in this frail source of sensual pleasure, and not in the living God, "who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." The advice of the psalmist is: "If riches increase set not your heart upon them." And he adds: "God hath spoken once; twice have I heard this, that power belongeth unto God." (1 Tim. vi. 17.) In connection with this point we cannot omit the emphatic language of Luther. "There are many," says he, "who imagine they possess God and every needed blessing, when they have acquired money and estates, and they are so proud of what they have gained, and place such reliance upon it, as to be indifferent to every thing else. They have indeed a god, called *Mammon*, which occupies the chief place in their hearts, and is the most common idol upon earth. He who possesses money and estates feels secure, and is as cheerful and unconcerned, as if he were in the midst of paradise. And on the other hand, he who possesses none, is as troubled and disheartened, as if ignorant of the existence of a God. There are few to be found who have sufficient confidence not to mourn or complain, if they cannot call *mammon* their own. This disposition clings to nature to the very grave."

2. An *inordinate attachment to any of the pursuits or enjoyments of life* betokens a condition of the mind at variance with the precept: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." We are commanded to yield the chief place in our affections to the Creator. Nor can this place be occupied by the Creator

Q. Can you mention any thing else that denotes a spirit of idolatry?

and other objects at the same time? We must either love God and hate the world, or else we must despise God and cleave to the world. (1 John, ii. 15.)

3. *Friends* often become the idols of our attachment, and win from us those affections which belong to God. Those ties of fond endearment which bind us to each other in life, are perfectly consistent with "the love and the fear of God," and yet they are often conducive to the neglect of those paramount duties, which man owes his Maker. How common is it for a parent to be so entirely devoted to the temporal interests of his child, as to forget the relation he sustains to him who is the Parent of the universe.

Again: When the desire of seeking the favor and protection of the influential and the great, is stronger than any other, and causes the mind to overlook the interesting truth, that the providential care of the Almighty is exercised over all his works, and that under every circumstance of perplexity or discouragement, our petitions ought first to be offered up to him, we betray a forgetfulness of God, closely allied to that which led the Israelites to bow before the golden calf.

4. *Self* becomes the object of our idolatry when every effort is employed to add to personal beauty, whilst our moral obligations are forgotten; or when we seek to extend our influence, merely for the sake of popular admiration; when our acquirements only serve to minister to our pride, or when the service of God is performed

Q. Is it possible for the Creator and the world to occupy the same place in the heart at the same time? What passage of Scripture goes to prove this? Can you mention any other objects of inordinate love? When does attachment to friends become idolatry? When does self become the object of our idolatry?

to gain the approbation of the world. Thus the pharisees prayed in places of public resort, not that they might render an acceptable tribute to the Almighty, but that they *might be seen of men*.

Self becomes the object of idolatry when human wisdom is placed in opposition to the wisdom of God. Even intellectual pursuits may contribute to that mental condition, which is entirely at variance with the love and the fear of the Creator. Man may become the worshiper of his own reason. He may deify those faculties of the mind, which, though they rank him high in the scale of being, have nevertheless been bestowed by an all creating power, and he may attribute qualities to these which belong to God alone. Nay, the pride of intellect may even cause him to deny the very existence of his Maker. We have a melancholy proof of this in those systems of philosophy ("falsely so called,") which seek to undermine the very foundation of revealed truth, and to substitute in its stead, the cold, cheerless doctrines of infidelity.

There is also a *spiritual* idolatry. Men are guilty of this when "they resort to erroneous and unworthy views of the divine character, rather than listen to the plain language of Scripture. The Bible informs us how idolatry was introduced into the world: 'They did not like to retain God in their knowledge;' 'they changed the truth of God into a lie.' The same causes are still at work, though from the improved state of knowledge they do not manifest themselves in so crude a manner. Literal idolatry is not to be feared in our day, and in a civilized country, but spiritual idolatry, or such views

Q. In what does spiritual idolatry consist ?

of the divine character, as lower it down to the wishes and desires of corrupt nature, are as prevalent as ever.”

The Almighty is to occupy the chief place in our affections ALONE, as the expression, (*neben mir*,) “besides me” plainly indicates. This twofold worship, here distinctly forbidden, was established among the people of Israel, under Jeroboam. (1 Kings, xii. 28.) And it is practiced by those who pray to God, and are attentive to all the external duties of religion, but who are at heart the slaves of lust, and the servants of sin. The judgment of Christ in regard to this matter is: “No man can serve two masters.” (Matth. vi. 24.)

Luther's Explanation.

“We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.”

1. *Fear.* There is a fear unmingled with affection, and which leaves no room for its exercise. It is the terror with which the denunciations of the law inspire the wicked; who, sensible of the power of the Almighty to destroy them, and that all the perfections of his character are interested in the infliction of the penalty incurred by transgression, tremble at the thought of meeting him in judgment. The revealed exhibitions of the divine nature are indeed calculated to alarm the guilty soul; and though the wicked are the enemies of God, yet every circumstance conspires to make them dread

Q. What do you understand by the phrase (*neben mir*) *besides me*? Among whom did this two-fold worship exist? By whom established? Where do you find the account of it? What did Christ say in reference to this kind of worship? How does Luther explain the first commandment? How many kinds of fear are there? By whom is the first felt, and by what inspired?

his displeasure. The fear of the wicked may be traced to the following truths :

1. God is the lawgiver, and therefore requires obedience to the law.

2. He is Almighty, and can therefore inflict the penalty of disobedience.

3. He is just, and will therefore visit every act of unrepented sin with its merited punishment.

4. He is omnipotent and omniscient, consequently no secret of the heart can be concealed from his knowledge.

There is also a *filial fear*, perfectly consistent with the most devoted affection. This, for the sake of distinction, we have denominated *reverence*. The necessity of this distinction will be apparent if we bear in mind the testimony of inspiration : "There is no fear in love ; but perfect love casteth out fear : because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love." (1 John, iv. 18.)

It follows, that they who entertain this reverence for the Supreme Lawgiver, will also reverence the laws of the land, and those who are authorized to administer justice. The child thus influenced will respect the wishes of his parent, and the servant will render obedience to his master.

2. *Love*. The evidences of our affection for God are to be looked for within our own hearts. If we love him

Q. Have the wicked any reasons to tremble before God ? Mention the first. Second. Third. Fourth. Is there any other kind of fear ? What do we call this ? By whom felt ? Can any other fear be co-existent with love ? Prove it from the Bible. In what estimation are human law and authority held by those who reverence the Supreme Lawgiver ? Where are we to look for the evidences of our affection for God ? If we love him how will we regard him, and in what will we delight ?

we must regard him as our chief good, delight to hold sweet and frequent intercourse with him at the throne of grace, and to obey his righteous requirements. Another evidence of the believer's love to God is his affection for his fellow-men. Without the latter the former cannot exist, as it is expressly declared, (1 John, iv. 20.) "If a man say I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen."

3. *Confidence.* The reasons which induce the believer to place unlimited confidence in God, are obvious.

a. He is infinite in power, and can therefore fulfil his promises.

b. He possesses all knowledge, and is therefore acquainted with all our wants.

c. He is Omnipresent, and is therefore ever near to listen to our cries.

d. His wisdom is infinite, and he can therefore order his dispensations, so as to promote our happiness in time and eternity.

e. He is faithful and kind, and will therefore provide us with every blessing we need, if we pray to him aright.

Its fruits. a. This confidence will make us bold and fearless in the discharge of moral duty. It supported Luther when he appeared before the imperial diet at Worms; and it sustained Paul, when he addressed the elders of the Ephesian church, and announced to them

Q. Can we love God and hate our fellow-men? What is the testimony of Scripture on this point? Has the believer any grounds of confidence in God? Mention the first. Second. Third. Fourth. Fifth. What are the fruits of this confidence?

that he was going "bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that should befall him there." (Acts, xx.)

b. This confidence gives impulse to Christian effort. Depending on the promises of God, the friends of the Bible and of missions have prosecuted their important work, whilst a thousand circumstances of discouragement have combined to check their progress; nor have they ever found their trust in the Almighty misplaced.

c. It also produces serenity and contentment of mind, notwithstanding the adverse and trying incidents of life.

4. There is also a *false confidence*. *a.* It consists in expecting the gifts of Divine Providence without employing the means of their attainment.

b. In hoping for salvation without the diligent use of the means of grace.

There is a species of idolatry in the present age to which we have briefly alluded, and which draws the mind away from the contemplation of the true God, as effectually as any other. It is that entire devotion to the pursuits and pleasures, the riches and honors of life, which constitutes a plain evidence, that many regard these as the only sources of enjoyment. This is decidedly wrong and sinful in the extreme, for every means of present happiness we possess is the gift of that kind and gracious Being who "sends his rain on the just and on the unjust." Our wealth, friends, and estates, are but second causes of whatever degree of happiness

Q. What do you understand by *false confidence*? In what light are we to regard our riches, friends and estates, as first or second causes of enjoyment?

they confer, and we are to look beyond these, to that Almighty friend, who richly supplies his creatures with every needed blessing. If we put our trust in the gifts bestowed, instead of the giver who bestows them, we are already guilty of a forgetfulness of God, which has close resemblance to the professed worship of wood and stone.

The first commandment requires you, my young friends, as well as all other created intelligences, to love the true God above all other objects, and to offer your vows and prayers to him alone; and this, as soon as you understand your religious obligations. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," is the advice of inspiration. This God who requires your worship, and whom you are *alone* to serve, is self-existent, eternal, present every where in all parts of creation at once, well acquainted with all the thoughts and intents of the heart, of infinite power as well as majesty. He has placed you under peculiar obligations to love and serve him, as your *Creator, preserver, and Redeemer.*

a. As your Creator he has endowed you with those faculties of body and of mind, which place you high on the scale of being. He has given you immortal souls, and destined you for an immortal existence.

b. As your preserver he has ever watched over you, and kept you safe from the thousand ills and accidents of life. In addition to this he has provided for you a thousand sources of rational enjoyment. He has given you friends; he supplies your daily wants; he causes

Q. In whom then should your confidence be placed? Why? What does the first commandment require of you? What are the grounds of this love, or in what relation does the Almighty stand to you? As your Creator what has he done for you?

the grass and the flowers to grow, and beautify the face of nature. The rain and the sun are his, and at his command they enrich and fertilize the earth.

c. As your Redeemer, he has sent his own son into the world to atone for your guilt by his death upon the cross.

But you are not to engage in the service of the Almighty without a careful examination of the *motives* that influence you in your decision to be his. Motive gives character to action. Though an action may be good in itself, if the motive in which it originates is evil, the action becomes altogether meritless. Our services, to be acceptable to God, must spring from affection, and be dictated by the profoundest reverence for his character and law. Though our professions of piety be ever so loud, and our deeds of benevolence ever so splendid and imposing, yet if they are performed in a spirit of selfishness, and if their whole aim is to gain the admiration of the world, they become the very mockery of devotion, and only constitute the evidences of our idolatry.

As God is a *spirit*, you are required to worship him in spirit and in truth. In your supplications and offerings of praise to him, whose presence pervades all nature, you are holding communion with an invisible Being, of whom you are forbidden even to form a mental likeness. It is not uncommon even for good men, in their addresses to the Supreme Being, to form an image, or representation of that Being in the mind. But as we

Q. As your preserver? As your redeemer? By what are you to test the character of your actions? What motives must induce you to serve God, if your services are to be acceptable to him? *How* are you to worship him? *Why*?

cannot conceive the peculiar essence of the divine nature, and as this mental image must necessarily resemble something "that is in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth," beyond which our conceptions cannot reach, it is undeniable, that even this is wrong, and opposed to the spirit of the first commandment. Spiritual adoration does not require that you should behold its object; it only requires you to believe that he exists, and that he is the "rewarder of all those who diligently seek him."

You are to worship the Creator not only in spirit, but also in *truth*. That is: your worship is to be of such a nature as is required by that revelation of his character and will which the gospel contains. He is uncreated, therefore you are to worship him as the first great cause of all things that exist. He is omnipotent and faithful, hence you are to place unlimited confidence in all his promises. He is omnipresent and omniscient, the searcher of the hearts of the children of men, consequently you are to regulate your desires and passions according to his will, and unresistingly yield to his requirements.

In view of these solemn obligations, the great question for each one of you to decide is: Am I willing to make this surrender of myself to him who rules among the armies of heaven, and controls the destinies of men. Shall that God who led Israel out of the land of Egypt be my God? And in the decision of this question, remember that he is the only source of all your present joys, and

Q. Is it necessary to spiritual worship that its object should be present to our senses? What is necessary? What is it to worship the Creator in *truth*? Is there any question for you to decide as responsible beings?

that he alone can secure to you the bliss of heaven. Nor are you to delay this duty a single moment after you become convinced of its importance, and your individual obligation to perform it. Many of the Israelites were cut off in the midst of their idolatry. And many "whose God is the world," are summoned in such an hour as they think not, to appear in the presence of the great Eternal. If you love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and "have no other Gods before him;" if you make your will subservient to his, and suffer your passions and desires to be controlled by his spirit, he has promised to be your everlasting friend. Be persuaded, then, to make this surrender of yourselves to the Almighty; be persuaded to sacrifice every pleasure, and abandon every pursuit that comes in the way of your duty to him. You will find his service to be sweet, and by no means grievous; and should every other source of joy fail you; should you be deserted by every earthly friend, the language of your triumphant soul will then be, "If God be for us, who can be against us."

PRAYER.

Almighty Father, who art the source of every blessing, and whose goodness is manifest to all men, especially to those who love thee, grant that I may be enabled to cherish a spirit of filial confidence and affection toward thee! Give me thy grace, that I may feel the profoundest reverence for thy character; strengthen me to walk in the way of thy commandments, and enable me to yield a willing obedience to all human laws, and to respect and honor the wholesome regulations of human society! Let me remember, that thy paternal care is continually exercised; that all the events of life are ordered by thy wisdom; and that all the occurrences of thy Providence are intended for our

Q. Do you feel the importance of that decision? Should it not be immediate? Why?

good! May I never forget the precepts of thy beloved Son, Jesus Christ, and may I ever cherish the grateful recollection of the good he has done for us, as well as the happiness he will hereafter confer, if we trust in, and obey him!

Inspire me with pure thoughts and holy desires! Grant that I may hate, and flee from every sin! Guard me from the many dangers to which I am exposed! Preserve to me health, and every other needful blessing! Enable me to walk circumspectly before men, and to become daily better qualified for the discharge of duty; increase my love to thee; enlarge continually the imperfect views I entertain of thy character, and let no idol usurp the place in my affections, that belongs to thee alone!

Guard me from the corrupting influence of evil examples, and let the watchful care of thy spirit be at all times exercised over me, that I may be ever ready to hear, learn and do thy will! Amen!

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”

“It is required of us in this commandment, that we should so fear and love God, as not to curse, swear, conjure, lie, or deceive in his name; but call upon him in every time of need, and worship him with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.”

This commandment is prohibitive, and forbids the ordinary and profane use of those titles which belong to, and designate the Divine Being. The contemplation of the power, majesty, holiness, and goodness of the Almighty, must awaken feelings of the profoundest awe in every mind capable of being influenced by the sublimest and most interesting of all truths. Nor can the profane

Q. Repeat the second commandment. What is required of us in this commandment? Does this commandment prohibit or require a certain course of action? What does it forbid?

use of the name of Deity be considered in any other light than as a proof of the most revolting irreverence for his character. For with the *name*, we always associate the idea of an object, and thus the various titles which belong to God serve to remind us of all the high and changeless perfections of his nature.

This command may be violated in

- a. Ordinary conversation.
- b. Prayer.
- c. The worship of God.
- d. Cursing and blasphemy.
- e. Oaths and vows.
- f. Calling on the Almighty to witness the honesty of fraudulent practices. (Deceit.)
- g. Making use of the name of the devil.
- h. Sporting with sacred subjects.
- i. Smiling at the blasphemy of others.
- k. The practice of reading books in which sacred subjects are treated with contempt.

a. The most ordinary conversation frequently indicates the entire absence of that reverence for the divine character, which we are taught to cherish. For instance, when one individual relates to another, circumstances that create disappointment or surprise, the divine name is often thoughtlessly employed by way of ejaculation. Nothing can be more evident than the folly and guilt of such a practice. Among Germans and their descendants this practice is so common, that many suffer scarcely a

Q. What does the profane or common use of the name of God betray? In what respects may this command be violated?—mention the first, the second, and so on. What do we often perceive in ordinary conversation? How are we to regard this practice? Is it common among Germans and their descendants?

moment to pass, especially when the conversation is of a somewhat interesting or exciting character, without employing such expressions as 'Herr Je,' 'ach Gott,' 'Lord Jesus,' 'O God,' and so on. To say the least of this custom, it betrays a want of proper attention to the command: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain." And though many individuals who practice it may be innocent of any design of irreverence or profanity, when brought to understand the full import of the prohibition, they will discover abundant cause for deep humiliation. The practice cannot indeed be justified on any ground, and its abandonment is called for by every consideration of interest and duty, for, "*The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*"

b. *Prayer*, when it does not bear to heaven the devout and genuine sentiments of the heart, and when it is an act of mere formality, with which the feelings of the soul have nothing to do, can be regarded in no other light, than as a violation of the second commandment. The man who prays calls upon the name of the Almighty, and if his approaches to the throne of grace are not dictated by a sense of human guilt and dependence, he calls upon that name in vain.

c. Those who engage in the services of the sanctuary but are attentive only to the external observances of religion, are virtually guilty of the violation of this command: *a.* because their hearts are unaffected by the solemn exhibition of revealed truth, which is a plain manifestation of contempt for the will of the Almighty, and

Q. In what light are we to regard such expressions as 'Herr Je,' 'ach Gott?' When is this command violated in prayer? When is it violated by those who engage in the public worship of God?

of consequent irreverence for his character: *b.* because they sing the praises of God, though they cherish no feelings of gratitude or love, and are insensible to every emotion of pious joy.

d. *Cursing* and *blasphemy*, or the invocation of the divine wrath upon those who have incurred our displeasure, is expressly forbidden in this commandment. The present age is as distinguished perhaps for the widespread influence of infidelity, as for the active efforts of Christian benevolence. We witness this influence in the loud blasphemies that are uttered, with such fearful emphasis, in every part of the land. In all places of public resort, on every thoroughfare, and in all the lanes and streets of our cities, we hear the bitter execrations of the blasphemer. He calls down the curses of the Almighty upon his own soul, or the souls of others. So common indeed has it become for man thus to dare his Maker, that the name of God, associated with the most impious and disgusting language, has become a familiar sound. The least excitement of feeling is exhibited by many in the violation of this commandment. How seldom do those, who are guilty of this glaring sin, reflect that the Lord will not hold them guiltless, and that whilst they are invoking the bitterest curses upon themselves and others, their own damnation is perhaps sealed forever.

e. *Perjury*, is also an obvious violation of this commandment. It may consist, *a.* in giving false testimony

Q. In what other respect may this command be broken? Is it common to hear the name of God blasphemed? What will be the result of such conduct? Can any degree of provocation or excitement justify it? What else do you consider the violation of this commandment? In what does perjury consist?

under oath; and, *b.* in making vows which we never intend to perform, or in the non-observance of vows which we are obligated by every worthy consideration to fulfil.

Perjury, (in the common acceptation of the term,) is the act of calling upon God to witness the truth of what we know to be false, when the oath is administered by legally constituted authority. Such an act betrays either *a.* the disbelief of the divine omniscience, or *b.* truth, or *c.* existence; or else it manifests *d.* a total want of respect for the character of God, and an entire disregard of his threatenings. It is indeed enough to make one shudder to listen to the conflicting testimony often produced in our courts of justice, where individuals swear with equal positiveness, whose statements are as opposed to each other, as day and night. And there seems to be, on ordinary occasions, in the very administration of an oath, a carelessness and irreverence of manner, which tends no doubt, in a great degree, to the encouragement of false swearing, by divesting the ceremony of all that imposing solemnity which ought to attach to it.

The law justly regards the crime of perjury as deserving the severest punishment. And it thus recognizes the reverence which is due to the *name*, as well as the *character* of God. In most cases, however, the limited range of human knowledge affords the guilty the means of escape. But there is a Judge before whom the perjurer will be summoned to appear, and whose decision will be based on an intimate acquaintance with all the

Q. What constitutes perjury in the eye of human law? What does the act of perjury betray? How ought oaths to be administered? In awarding a severe penalty to this crime, what does human law recognize? Does the perjurer ever escape the penalty of human law? By whom will his guilt be punished?

circumstances of the case. Though he may escape the vigilance of man, he will not escape the all-seeing eye of the Almighty. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless." But he will have to answer the solemn charge of taking the name of God in vain, when earthly interests will no longer possess any charm, and when all things will be viewed in the light of eternity.

b. Vows offered to God partake of the nature of oaths, and their non-observance is a direct violation of the second commandment. "If a man vow a vow unto the Lord, or swear an oath to bind his soul with a bond; he shall not break his word, he shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth." (Num. xxx. 2.) When, for instance, an individual approaches the altar, and there makes the offering of his services to Christ, he solemnly promises to walk in the path of moral duty, and voluntarily assumes all those sacred obligations imposed in the gospel. "He swears an oath unto the Lord, and binds his soul with a bond." If, then, he is guilty of the *wilful* neglect of duty, if he profanes the Sabbath, omits the reading of the scriptures, never engages in prayer, absents himself from the Lord's table, thus refusing to commemorate the Saviour's dying love, he violates a vow voluntarily made, and recorded in the book of everlasting remembrance. If, then, the neglect of moral duty on the part of those who have solemnly pledged themselves to its performance, involves this dreadful sin, it becomes every one duly to consider the obligations which devolve upon the professed followers of Christ,

Q. What do you understand by vows? Can you mention a passage where vows are regarded as oaths? When does the professed Christian make such a vow? When does he break it? Is there danger of the professed Christian's breaking his solemn vows?

before he assumes them; nor is it less important for every member of the church to cultivate a spirit of watchfulness and prayer, lest he become forgetful of these sacred promises, made at the altar of his God, witnessed on earth, and written in heaven.

f. The violation of this commandment also consists in calling upon the Almighty to witness the honesty of fraudulent practices, (*deceit.*) This is so nearly allied to perjury that you may fail to discover the difference. Indeed there is no real distinction. In a moral point of view, and in the sight of God, the one is just as criminal as the other. The distinction is altogether artificial. Human laws recognize the one as perjury, and pass by the other without notice. According to the divine law, they are ranked together. In the eye of human law an individual is considered guilty of perjury, when, in a court of justice, he testifies falsely under oath. But he may administer the same oath to himself, and call upon the same omniscient Being to witness the truth of what is equally false, and escape the infliction of human justice. This species of perjury, which exposes man equally to the indignation of his Maker, is practiced in many of the every day transactions of life. A person wishes to dispose of certain property. He estimates it far beyond its actual value, and exaggerates its advantages. But if the truth of his representations is questioned, he asserts again and again their perfect fairness, and even brings to his aid the most solemn oaths to give an air of candor

Q. What influence should this have upon him? **A.** It should beget and keep alive a spirit of watchfulness and prayer. **Q.** In what other respect may this command be violated? Is there any real difference between this act and perjury? In whose estimation are they equally wrong? Where is the latter kind of perjury practiced? Can you mention an instance?

to these representations, though he knows them to be in a great measure false, and though they are made purposely to deceive. It is needless to multiply particular instances of this kind, since it is well known with what facility men destitute of principle and the fear of God, resort to these means of promoting their temporal interests. They who thus lie or deceive in the name of God, take his name in vain, and the Lord will not hold them guiltless. It is just as if they thought that God would connive at, and sanction their fraud, and is therefore a plain and positive act of the most revolting irreverence.

g. Employing the name of the devil under circumstances that do not call for, or justify its use, is (by *association*) a violation of the second commandment. The conspicuous place he holds in the history of the fall, and the distinguished rank he occupies among the enemies of God, render it next to impossible for any one to think of his name, without associating with it the name of the great Eternal. The mental process on which this depends is familiar to all.

h. Again: They virtually break this commandment, who quote passages of Scripture in connection with profane or trifling conversation, or who make sport in any way of sacred things. The books of the Old and New Testament contain a divine revelation, and we cannot betray a feeling of contempt for the truths they communicate, and at the same time entertain that reverence which is due the divine character. Were the subject of an earthly king to trample the proclamation of his sov-

Q. Is the common use of the name of the Devil justifiable? On what principle is it a violation of this command? In what other way may this command be broken?

ereign under his feet, or hold it up to public view as an object of ridicule or contempt, he would certainly evince a want of respect for the royal character. And all Scripture is so intimately associated with the divine name, that we cannot trifle with its momentous disclosures, without offering an insult to God himself.

i. To smile at the blasphemy of others, or to exhibit any other evidence of approbation in the presence of those who commit this awful sin, is opposed to the spirit of this commandment, and will certainly bring with it the charge of its violation. This principle is recognized in human law. The individual who consents to receive from a thief the wages of his iniquity, knowing the circumstances under which they were obtained, comes under the censure of the law, and is punished just as if he were the thief himself. No one questions the wisdom and the justice of this arrangement. For it is evidently as great a crime, in a moral sense, to sanction theft, as to commit it. This principle applies to the case of blasphemy, as well as to the case just mentioned, and it becomes the plain duty of every one who fears God, and has the honor of his name at heart, to frown upon every exhibition of disrespect for his character. For he who sanctions blasphemy, is a partaker with blasphemers, and as he shares the guilt, he must also expect to share the penalty.

I am aware of the difficulty that often attends the course here recommended; and yet the duty is so plain that no apology for its non-performance will stand the test of a

Q. Is it wrong to smile at the blasphemy of others? Why? What course should every lover of God pursue, when he hears the language of profanity?

candid examination. Some are profane more from custom and education, than from any intention of treating the name and character of God with contempt; and the habit in such cases is so fixed, and appears to be so entirely the result of accident, that we are frequently inclined to regard it as altogether harmless, and inoffensive in the sight of heaven. But though there may be cases of this sin, more aggravated than others, yet every instance in which the name of Deity, and sacred things, are treated irreverently, however modified by what we may consider extenuating circumstances, arises from the natural corruption of the human heart; and as an act performed by unregenerate man, must come under the censure of an infinitely just and holy God. And besides, the character of blasphemy is written on the very face of it. Blasphemy is a direct violation of that commandment which says: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain," and though it may be the result of habit, this does not constitute any apology for the act; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. As a habit, it is not only one of the most disgusting and pitiful, but one of the most awful to which the soul can become enslaved. To excuse it, therefore, under any circumstances, is to sanction what the Scriptures unqualifiedly condemn. But the *sanction* of a forbidden act, and its *performance*, are so nearly allied, that the guilt of each is the same. Therefore I repeat, that to smile at the blasphemy of others, or to exhibit any

Q. Can those who are profane from habit or education plead this as an excuse? Are there any circumstances that justify the violation of this command? What difference is there between the sanction and the performance of a wrong action?

evidence of approval in the presence of those who commit this dreadful sin, is contrary to the spirit of the second commandment, and will certainly incur the charge of its violation.

k. Finally — The practice of reading books in which sacred subjects are treated in a light and trifling manner, is in fact nothing else than a violation of this commandment. The taste of those who indulge in this practice, proves the condition of their moral feelings. They delight in the perusal of those writings which bring ridicule upon religion, and its blessed institutions, and their minds, constituted for such gratification, must be void of all reverence for the name and character of Deity.

We cannot, indeed, be too careful in the selection of books, for instruction or amusement; especially, in an age, when the tendency of most writings is to cast contempt on sacred things, and to invest with a fictitious charm the corrupting pleasures of sin. They who peruse without distinction, the popular literature of the day, are in danger of losing whatever taste they possess, for the duties and enjoyments of piety. Many writers of the present age, whose productions are read with avidity, if not infidel in principle, are so like it, that it is extremely difficult to rank them among the advocates of Christianity. To become familiar with books, is to hold converse with the writers themselves. Books are companions, and they speak to us as plainly as if we were addressed by a living voice; and we are apt to be more or less affected by the principles they set forth. They are either

Q. Is it right to read books in which sacred subjects are irreverently treated? What are we to think of those who delight in such kind of reading? What is the character of many writings of the present age? What is the difference between reading books and conversing with their authors?

the most dangerous advocates of error, or the most successful champions of truth. Their good or evil influence is almost irresistible. We take them with us in solitude and there the mind is left to roam, undisturbed, wherever they lead; either conducted amid scenes of vice and guilty joy, or else elevated, in holy contemplation, to heaven.

But if it is virtual blasphemy to sit down and converse with the blasphemer; to court his society and to give sanction to his impious language; then it is equally so to peruse those writings which set religion and its sacred influence at naught, and inculcate principles, opposed to the pure and holy truths of revelation; or which tend, in the least degree, to bring into contempt the high perfections of Jehovah, or to create a distaste for the rational enjoyments of piety.

Recapitulation. It is forbidden, as we have seen, in this commandment: *a.* To make familiar use of the name of Deity in ordinary conversation; *b.* To offer prayers which are formal and insincere; *c.* To listen to the word of God without being influenced by his will, and to engage in the external duties of religion, whilst opposed in sentiment and practice to its purifying principles; *d.* To curse and blaspheme; *e.* To testify falsely under oath, and to violate vows of obedience to the divine law; *f.* To lie or deceive in the name of God; *g.* To make needless use of the name of the devil; *h.* To sport with sacred things; *i.* To sanction the blasphemy of others; *k.* To read impious books, and all writings of an irreligious tendency.

State again what is forbidden in this commandment.

In each of these respects man may betray a want of reverence for the divine character, for which the Lord will not hold him guiltless. Its most obvious violation however, consists in open blasphemy, and to this we shall confine our concluding remarks.

The swearer's practice is one which promises no advantage, either in this world or the next. If his imprecations have no meaning, then there is certainly nothing to justify his guilt; and if they have a meaning, then we must class him among the worst of fools, for he not only pronounces the bitterest curses against others, but often utters against his own soul, the damnation of hell. It is indeed enough to make one's blood run cold, to listen to the startling oaths and impious language of the blasphemer. Nor will the Lord hold him guiltless. Could he escape the judgment of that tribunal from which there is no appeal, his case even then would be revolting enough; for he would pass through life distinguished among the despisers of God. But the Lord will not hold him guiltless. Every oath he utters, and every imprecation that escapes his lips, finds a place among the records of eternity; and in the great day of retribution, the fearful aggregate of his guilt, will start up before him. He will behold that God whose name and character he has ever contemned; but those smiles of mercy, which might have beamed upon him, will be concealed behind the fearful expression of his wrath. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea"—says St. John, "and I saw a beast rise up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and

Q. In what does the most obvious violation of this command consist?

upon his heads the name of blasphemy." And again: "If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name." (Rev. xiv. 9, 10, 11.) To whatever we refer this prophetic language, it distinctly pronounces the doom of him who reviles the name of the Creator. Debarred from all intercourse with adoring spirits, he will be destined to associate with those, whose blasphemies rise up forever, and who, under the just inflictions of divine wrath, will remain impenitent through a long eternity. "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast; and his kingdom was full of darkness; and they gnawed their tongues for pain, and blasphemed the God of heaven because of their pains and their sores, and *repented not of their deeds.*" (Rev. xvi. 10, 11.)

If the doom of the blasphemer is dreadful, it is no less just. The devils delight to blaspheme the Almighty, and men, who take the name of the Lord in vain; and thus engage in the very occupation of the damned, cannot expect to bear the harp of God, and chant the "song of Moses and the Lamb."

Luther adverts to the *duties* inculcated in the second

Q. What duties does Luther mention as inculcated in this commandment?

commandment, as follows: "We should call upon God in every time of need, and worship him with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving."

1. The first duty here enjoined is to call upon God in every time of need. The *reasonableness* of this duty will appear, if we consider that all created things are dependant on the Creator. Although when we are in want, we apply for relief to those around us, we ought to remember that our "help cometh" from Him who is the disposer of all events, and who can turn and influence the "hearts of the children of men." The *encouragement* to the performance of this duty, is derived from the sacred Scriptures, where we find that blessings have been frequently conferred, in answer to prayer. Solomon prayed for an understanding heart, and his petition was granted. (1 Kings, iii. 9, 10.) Hezekiah prayed, that Senacherib might raise the siege of Jerusalem, and the angel of the Lord smote the Assyrians. (2 Kings, xix. 15, 20, and 35, 36.) Jehoshaphat prayed for victory over the Moabites and Ammonites, and they were destroyed. (2 Chron. xx.)

These petitions, to be availing, must be offered in a spirit of *devotion*, *fervency* and *resignation*. By *devotion* may be understood that feeling of affection and reverence, which the revealed knowledge of the divine perfections is so well calculated to excite. The spirit of *resignation*

Q. The first duty is to call upon God in every time of need—from what do you infer the reasonableness of this duty? What encouragement have we to engage in the duty of prayer? For what did Solomon pray? For what did Hezekiah pray? For what did Jehoshaphat pray? Were these prayers answered? In what spirit must these prayers be offered? What do you understand by a spirit of devotion? What by a spirit of fervency? What by a spirit of resignation?

pervaded that memorable petition of the Saviour, which fell from his lips in Gethsemane: "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; *nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt.* (Matth. xxvi. 39.) This duty is to be performed —

a. When suffering the ills and adversities of life; (that courage and confidence may not fail us.)

b. In case of national judgments, such as pestilence, war, and famine; (to obtain deliverance.)

c. When about to pursue any course of action in regard to whose expediency or propriety, we entertain doubts; (that we may receive wisdom from above.)

d. When assailed by temptation; (that we may be endowed with the power of resistance.)

e. When we commence the labors of the day; (that prosperity may attend our lawful pursuits, and that the care of divine providence may be exercised over us.)

f. When we read the sacred Scriptures; and,

g. When we visit the sanctuary; (that we may enjoy the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the divine spirit, and thus become "doers," as well as readers and 'hearers of the word.')

2. We are also required to *pray* to the Creator; not only, *a.* that all temporal blessings may descend richly upon us and our fellow-men; but especially *b.* that his kingdom may be established within and around us, and that the spiritual advantages which we enjoy, under the mild administration of the Prince of Peace, may be rapidly and universally disseminated.

Q. Who manifested that spirit in an eminent degree? On what occasion? When is this duty to be performed? And for what purpose? Are we to pray for temporal blessings? For what other blessings are we to pray? In whose behalf are we to pray?

3. It is also enjoined upon us to *thank* Him who is 'the giver of every good and every perfect gift,' for all the benefits we enjoy.

a. For temporal blessings—such as food, health, clothing, friends, possessions, social comforts, the advantages secured to us under a free government, the enjoyment of national peace and security, and exemption from civil discord and foreign invasion.

b. For spiritual blessings; among which may be enumerated, the Bible, the institutions and ordinances of religion, the strengthening and regenerating influences of the Holy Spirit, the privilege of prayer, and so on.

4. It is further required of us to address Jehovah in accents of *praise*. The ground of this praise may be stated as follows:

a. His adorable perfections—majesty, power, wisdom, truth, love, and so on.

b. The arrangements of his providence, all adapted to promote the comfort and happiness of man.

c. The deep interest he has manifested in reference to the salvation of the soul. (Psalm ciii.)

In conclusion, it may be remarked, that all our intellectual and spiritual faculties have been conferred for this great and interesting purpose. Man was created to praise and glorify his maker; and if the evidences of the power, majesty, wisdom and goodness of the Almighty, afforded in the works of nature, and especially in the system of grace; if these fail to arrest his attention, and to awaken feelings of the profoundest reverence

Q. For what are we to *thank* the Creator? Enumerate some of the temporal blessings which call for our grateful acknowledgments to God. Mention spiritual blessings. Should we *praise* the Almighty? What is the ground of that praise?

and love, the chief end of his creation is not attained. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handywork," whilst the transactions of Calvary, fraught with overwhelming interest, display the mercy, no less than the justice, truth, and holiness of Him "with whom we have to do." When the mind is directed in prayerful contemplation to those interesting truths, which nature and revelation disclose to us, the heart must be affected, and be filled with admiration and holy awe. Such a conception of the greatness, majesty, and glory of God, is the basis of every act of pure and heartfelt adoration; and the prayers, praises, entreaties, and confessions of the soul, when they arise from this view of the divine character, and are suggested by a sense of human dependence and divine compassion, and when the spirit of devotion, fervency, and resignation pervades them, are pleasing to the divine mind, because perfectly consistent with that reverence which is due to his great and holy name. Hence we are permitted, when our hearts are thus seriously and piously disposed, to 'call upon the Lord in every time of need, and to worship him with prayer, praise, and thanksgiving.' Such acts of devotion, instead of being prohibited, are encouraged, and positively enjoined.

O when will the whole earth bless the Lord for his goodness, and for his marvellous works! When will the nations learn to hallow the name of Him who reigns among the armies of heaven; who is clothed in majesty, and power, and truth; in whom all perfection is centered!

"The God who rules on high,
Who all the earth surveys,
Who rides upon the stormy sky,

And calms the roaring seas;
This awful God is ours;"

He speaks to us in the tempest; he speaks to us in all the merciful regulations of his providence; he speaks to us through the prophets and apostles, and the Son of his love; he addresses us in the still small voice of conscience; and we are taught by every monitor to reverence his character, and to glorify his name. Let us "hear instruction, and be wise, and refuse it not."

"Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;
Praise him all creatures here below;
Praise him above, ye heavenly host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."

PRAYER.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name! Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits!

I would bless *thee*, O Lord, whom angels worship, and whom the spirits of the just delight to honor, and I would unite in their songs of praise. Let my soul be raised above all created things, whilst, with the eye of faith, I look upon thee, the Creator of all that exists in heaven and on earth. In faith would I behold thee, O Sun of righteousness, the light of every believing soul.

May I be enabled to praise thee, most merciful God, with all my powers, and to offer unto thee worthy thanks for all the demonstrations of thy goodness! Thy greatness and majesty, and the wise arrangements of thy government are infinite. I desire to worship thee aright, and devoutly pray that thy love may be shed abroad in my heart. Do thou, O God, my life and my strength, pour light into my soul, and inspire me with the spirit of devotion, that my lips may speak forth thy praise.

Sanctify me by thy grace, and cleanse me from all my pollutions, that the offering of my gratitude may be well-pleasing in thy sight. Establish thy dwelling in my soul, that I may know thee and call upon thee in spirit and in truth! Let thy praise be ever on my tongue; for who is like unto thee, thou fountain of every blessing, and who can celebrate thy greatness? To thee, our God, belong reverence, gratitude and love, forever. Amen.

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”

“It is enjoined in this commandment, that we should so fear and love God, as not to despise his word and the preaching of his gospel; but deem it holy, and willingly hear and learn it.”

The Sabbath was instituted at the end of creation, and its observance was solemnly enjoined upon our first parents. The sacred historian informs us (Gen. ii.) that “when the heavens and the earth were finished and all the host of them,” and when “on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, he blessed the seventh day and sanctified it.” When the Israelites were assembled at Mount Sinai, after their departure from the land of Egypt, the command: “Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy,” was announced to them, and formed a part of the moral law. This circumstance alone, is all that is necessary to establish the belief, that the obligation of the observance of the Sabbath, as a day set apart, in a peculiar sense, for the worship of the Creator, is *perpetual*, and that under the new, as under the old dispensation, it is to be devoted to this sacred and interesting purpose.

The Saviour says: “Think not that I am come to destroy (or annul) the law: I came not to destroy, but to fulfil,” (ratify, establish.) Here the Messiah evidently refers to the *whole* moral law, including the command, now under consideration. He censured the strictness of the Pharisees, it is true, who found fault with the disci-

Q. Repeat the third commandment. What is enjoined in this commandment? Where do you find the account of the institution of the Sabbath first enjoined? How long is the obligation of its observance intended to last? What is the testimony of the Saviour in regard to the moral law?

ples, because they plucked a few ears of corn on the Sabbath, to satisfy the cravings of hunger. And he also taught them, that all acts of benevolence, such as the healing of the sick, could be performed on that day, without the violation of the third commandment. But in this, he did not sanction what was *forbidden in the law*; he only justified what was consistent with the law, but opposed to the *unfounded traditions of the elders*.

In further support of the position, that the obligation of the observance of the Sabbath is perpetual, the following considerations may be urged.

1. *The Sabbath was instituted to commemorate the work of Creation.* Viewed in this light, it must ever be interesting to every member of the human race. How wonderfully are all "the manifold works of God" adapted to promote the comfort and happiness of man! He has ordained the sun to rule the day, and the moon to give light at night. He has established laws, to regulate the succession of seasons. He sends the rain, and the dew, and the gentle breeze of summer. All the beauties and sublimities of the material world, affording to the human mind a thousand objects of delightful contemplation, were arranged by his Almighty hand. And He has appointed man to "have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Surely, the completion of these interesting and merciful arrangements, deserves to be held in perpetual remembrance. And when, in addition to all this, we bear in mind that man him-

Q. What does this testimony prove, concerning the obligation imposed in the third commandment? For what purpose was the Sabbath instituted? What does this design of its institution prove? A. That the obligation of its observance is perpetual.

self, with all his mental and spiritual powers, formed a part of the creation, it is evident, that the obligation to commemorate this mighty work, will last, until the foundations of the earth shall be removed, and time itself, shall be lost in eternity.

2. The Sabbath was also instituted *for the purpose of holy meditation*. And if, when our first parents were yet in a state of innocence, they were required to spend this day in acts of devotion, (which we have no reason to doubt,) there certainly exists a greater necessity for such a regulation now, when the mind is so easily affected by the cares and pursuits of life. Man is no longer in a state of innocence. In his fallen condition, he is apt to be forgetful of God, and moral duty. Under these circumstances, such a regulation is absolutely called for; and the appointment of one day out of seven, on which we are to abstain from our accustomed labors and pursuits, and to engage in the duties of piety, displays the wisdom, as well as the goodness of the Creator.

The pious Israelite, no doubt experienced the benefit of thus retiring at stated intervals, from amid the distracting scenes and engagements of the world, to hold sweet and uninterrupted communion with his God. The same practice must secure to the Christian, a similar advantage. Indeed, as already remarked, it is rendered essential to his moral improvement, by his very constitution as a moral being. All the powers of the human

Q. For what other purpose was the Sabbath instituted? Is there any necessity now that one day out of seven should be set apart for holy meditation? Why is such a regulation, at present especially, absolutely called for? What does the institution of this day of sacred rest display, on the part of the Creator? A. Wisdom and goodness.

soul have become weakened by sin. And the Christian, as well as others, is brought into close and frequent contact with the cares and perplexities of life. Hence, he needs an occasional period of relaxation, when he may retire, as it were, from the world, and draw near to God. It is in the uninterrupted discharge of religious duty, that fresh vigor is imparted to his spiritual powers. In this way, he is prepared anew, to encounter and overcome the alluring temptations of sin.

How is it in the case of those who have been deprived for years of the means of grace, and the administrations of the sanctuary? By far the greater number of persons thus circumstanced, gradually lose their former taste for the duties and enjoyments of piety. The world eventually fills that place in the mind which belongs to the Creator, and maintains sole and undisputed sway over the affections. And in too many instances, there ensues an utter forgetfulness of moral obligation.

On the other hand, the man who enjoys and diligently improves the means of grace; who remembers the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and is attentive on that day to all the ordinances and duties of religion, and who abstains from labor, and holds intimate and delightful intercourse with his Maker; *that* man is prepared to engage in the every day employments of life, and to mingle in its busy and distracting scenes, secure from the danger of forgetting his obligations to God, or of neglecting the weighty interests of his immortal soul.

Q. Is the Christian in danger of forgetting his duty to God? Of what advantage then, is the observance of the Sabbath to him? In the case of those who have not enjoyed the means of grace for a long time, what takes place? How is it with the man who remembers the Sabbath day to keep it holy, and diligently improves the means of grace?

3. *The engagements of the Sabbath are emblematic of eternal blessedness.* This interesting truth must go far to establish the belief, that the obligation of its strict observance is equally binding upon all the generations of mankind. The public worship of God, especially the offering of prayer and praise in the sanctuary, resembles the engagements of the redeemed in heaven, more closely than any other human act. Angels, 'and the spirits of the blest made perfect,' delight to sing the praises of their Creator, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty."

If in the eternal world the soul is entirely free from the cares and vexations of life, nothing can be more profitable or more consistent with the spiritual nature and destination of man, than the discharge of that interesting duty, which is enjoined in the third commandment. To retire thus from the noise and bustle of the world, and to bow before the Lord in his sanctuary, where he has been pleased to afford, throughout all ages of the church, the most positive manifestations of his presence and his power, is an act, which not only tends to fix our meditations on the subject of a future world, but also affords to the soul, in some limited degree, a fore-taste of celestial joy.

The matters generally discussed on the Sabbath, by the ministers of religion, are admirably calculated to expand our views of the divine majesty, and power, and goodness, and truth; and thus, as we habitually contem-

Q. Of what are the employments of the Sabbath an emblem? Of what nature are the engagements of the redeemed in heaven? A. Spiritual. Why is the discharge of the duty enjoined in this commandment, eminently profitable to man? Or, in other words, to what does it tend? What effects are produced, by the serious and prayerful contemplation of the topics generally discussed on the Sabbath by the ministers of religion?

plate these perfections of the Almighty, our gratitude will become more intense, our devotions more elevated, our affections more refined, and all our spiritual faculties better prepared to study his character, to meditate upon his law, and to speak forth his praise throughout the ages of eternity.

4. The opinion cannot be maintained, *that the Christian is to regard every day as being alike sacred*, and that he is therefore under no obligation to pay extraordinary respect to the Sabbath. For this is impossible in the very nature of things. It is not denied, that the principles of his religion should actuate the believer in all his intercourse, and that he ought to carry these principles with him into the world, so that they may regulate his conduct there. But how can the mind be absorbed in holy meditation, amid the din and excitement of business? Follow this train of reasoning to the end, and it leads to one of two results equally impracticable: either the Christian must hold every day as sacred as he now regards the Sabbath, and must consequently abstain through the week from his ordinary employments, and engage in the public exercises of devotion; or else he must spend the Sabbath as he now spends the other days of the week, in the work-shop, in the counting-room, or in the field. The first of these results is not to be thought of; and the great difficulty of the opinion that all days are to be regarded as equally sacred, lies in this, that its practical tendency must be, to introduce among the occu-

Q. Is the Christian to regard every day as being alike sacred? Are the principles of the gospel to actuate believers at all times? Why is it impossible for him to regard every other day in the week in the same light in which he regards the Sabbath? To what results would such an opinion lead? Are either of these results practicable?

pations of the Sabbath, amusements and pursuits which are calculated to banish all serious impressions from the mind.

From all this it is evident, that one day out of seven is to be, in a particular sense, consecrated to God, and that the obligation of its religious observance is universal and perpetual; that it rests upon Christians as well as Jews; and will remain in force throughout all succeeding ages of the church. This opinion, as we have seen, is based upon the following considerations:

1. The Sabbath was instituted to commemorate the work of creation.

2. It was also appointed for the purpose of holy meditation.

3. The employments of the Sabbath are emblematic of eternal blessedness.

4. Its observance is positively enjoined in the moral law.

The alteration of the day, from the last to the first day of the week, cannot affect, in the least, the obligation imposed in the third commandment. For this alteration is sanctioned by competent authority. (Acts xx. 7.) Christ himself, repeatedly appeared to his disciples, after his resurrection, on the first day of the week, (John xx. 19, 26,) and also bestowed upon them, on that day, the gift of the Holy Ghost. (Acts ii.)

The event of the creation, which the Sabbath was

Q. What is evident from all that has been said? On what considerations is the argument for the perpetual observance of the Sabbath based? The day has been changed from the last to the first day of the week—how does this affect the obligation imposed in this law? By whom was this change sanctioned? From several of the Saviour's acts, how did he seem to regard it? What did he do on that day that appeared to favor the alteration?

instituted to commemorate, can be celebrated just as well on the first as on the last day of the week. And the wisdom of the arrangement, established under the new dispensation, cannot be questioned, if we remember that on the first day of the week, the Saviour arose from the dead. The Sabbath was appointed for the worship of the Creator ; and the Lord's day, which is commemorative of the Saviour's triumph over death, hell, and the grave, is admirably adapted to this interesting purpose. The redemption of the human race, by Jesus Christ, constitutes one of the strongest evidences of the love of God. And on the first day of the week we are led to praise him, not only in view of his majesty, power, and wisdom, displayed in all the works of his hand, but especially for the system of redeeming grace, in which mercy and truth have met together, and which restores, to every believing soul, the forfeited happiness of heaven.

It may be well to remark here, that the Jews still observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, commencing on Friday evening, according to Genesis ii. 3, and also in compliance with the command given in Exodus xx. 8, 10.

From this practice, many Christians entertain the sentiment that Saturday evening is holy time ; but as there is more than one opinion in regard to this subject, I shall dismiss it in the language of Mr. J. Abbott.

He says : " The actual inconvenience arising from this

Q. What event was the Sabbath instituted to commemorate ? What event is the Lord's day, or Christian Sabbath, instituted to commemorate ? When does the Jewish Sabbath commence ? Mention one or two passages of Scripture on which this custom is founded. Are there any disputes as to the time when the Christian Sabbath commences ?

diversity is comparatively slight. The great evil which these differences of opinion produce, is the interminable disputes which arise from them. Perhaps some of my readers, when they saw the subject of the Sabbath announced, may have been curious to know which side I was going to take in regard to some of these points; for example, on the question whether it is proper to commence holy time on Saturday evening, or on Sabbath morning. Now, in fact, I am going to take both sides. I am going to try to convince you that it is entirely immaterial which is adopted, and that the whole subject is completely unworthy of being made a matter of controversy among Christian brethren."

I proceed to consider—1. What duties are embraced in the requirement, 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;' and—2. In what its profanation consists.

1. *Attendance at Church* may be ranked among the chief duties required in the third commandment. In the third book of Moses, (xxvi. 2,) we read: "Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary." And under the Christian, as under the Jewish economy, the established means of grace as they are afforded in the house of God, are to be diligently improved. These consist in *a.* Reading the sacred Scriptures. *b.* Preaching the word. *c.* Prayer; and *d.* Singing the praises of the Almighty. Nor is there any ground for the assertion that we can render as acceptable a service to the Creator at home; unless we are deprived of all the public ordinances of religion, because, *a.* The worship of the saints on earth,

Q. What opinion prevails among many? Why is this question unworthy of being made a matter of controversy? What important duty, among others, is enjoined in this commandment? What are the means of grace enjoyed in the house of God?

like that of the blest in heaven, is intended to be *social*; and besides, *b.* Social worship was not only enjoined upon the Israelites by the express command of the law-giver, but also upon every member of the church of Christ, by the example of the Saviour and his apostles.

The results that flow from the faithful and conscientious discharge of this duty, consist in, *a.* The illumination of the mind, and *b.* The sanctification of the heart. Instruction must go before conversion; and the soul can never be regenerated, until the mind is enlightened, in regard to the first principles of Christianity. In the house of God this spiritual light is communicated to the understanding. And the ministers of religion have been appointed to explain the truth, to state its evidences, and to enforce the duty of its acceptance, both as a rule of faith and a standard of action. And thus the "preaching of the word," accompanied by that divine influence which emanates from the "Father of lights," becomes "the power of God unto salvation."

In order that these results may be experienced, it is essential that we —

a. Implore the aid of the holy spirit. The prayer of the psalmist should ascend from the heart of every one who is seeking after truth: "Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law." (Psalm, cxix. 18.) Nor can it be doubted that the small amount of good, accomplished by the preaching of the gospel, is to be attributed, in a great degree, to the want of a

Q. Give a reason why the Christian cannot worship God as acceptably at home as at church, provided sickness, or other unavoidable circumstances do not detain him from the house of God? Mention the results that flow from the faithful discharge of this duty. Which comes first, conversion or instruction? In order that these results may be experienced, what is necessary in the first place?

spirit of supplication, on the part of those who hear it.

b. We must listen gladly to the word, and treasure it up in our hearts, even though it may reprove our sins, and bring to light our deformities of moral character. (Luke, xi. 28. Gal. iv. 16.)

c. We must diligently and prayerfully meditate throughout the week, upon those truths which have been the subjects of our contemplation during the Sabbath, and allow them to regulate our desires, to purify our affections, and to control our conduct in our various intercourse. The results that flow from the enjoyment of the means of grace, to be beneficial, must be *practical*. The seed of instruction if it fall in a rich and fertile soil, will bring forth the "fruits of righteousness." And if an individual has enjoyed all the ordinances of religion as they are administered on the Sabbath, for years, without being practically influenced, he affords evidence of having been virtually guilty of the frequent violation of the third commandment; inasmuch as he has repeatedly entered the house of God, with a heart unprepared to engage in its solemn and interesting duties.

2. *At home* as well as in the sanctuary our employments on the Sabbath must be of a character corresponding with feelings of devotion; or, at any rate, not calculated to erase from the mind those convictions of duty, which the hearing and the reading of the sacred Scriptures are intended to impress.

Q. To what are we to attribute the fact, that the preaching of the gospel is so often ineffectual? What else is necessary, if we wish to be benefitted by the preaching of the word? What in the third place? What is the seed of instruction intended to produce? When an individual goes to church in a thoughtless frame of mind, of what is he guilty? We have important duties to perform in the house of God on the Sabbath—and where else?

The chief duties which devolve upon every individual at home, both before and after the services of the sanctuary, may be thus briefly enumerated: *a.* Prayer, *b.* Singing, *c.* The reading of the word of God. Again: Prayer may be divided into *private* and *social*. *Private prayer* is that which the believer offers when he is alone with his God. *Social prayer* is that in which every Christian head of a family is in duty bound to engage, with all the members of his household. In reference to *reading*, it may be said, that all books of a religious character, such as histories of the church, commentaries on the Bible, the lives of martyrs, reformers and missionaries, and others, eminent for piety and devotedness to the cause of truth, may be productive of decided advantage to the mind and the heart. Consequently, their perusal on the Sabbath is not inconsistent with the obligation imposed in the third commandment. Belonging to this class are the works generally contained in Sunday school and congregational libraries.

The following may be stated as the consequences which result from this manner of employing the consecrated hours of the Sabbath at home, previous and subsequent to the public services of the house of God:

I. The preparation of the mind to contemplate the solemn truths proclaimed from the pulpit.

a. To illustrate and establish this position, it may be necessary to remark, that the reading of the Scriptures, singing and prayer, (private and social,) tend to purify

Q. What duties are to be performed before and after visiting the house of God? How may prayer be divided? What is private prayer? What is social prayer? What kind of reading is appropriate to the Sabbath? Mention one of the results which flow from the faithful discharge of these duties at home.

and elevate our thoughts, and thus prepare the mind to enter upon those investigations of the character and will of God, and the duty of man, to which it is directed by the ministers of religion. If we enter the sanctuary, meditating on our worldly plans and pursuits, we cannot reasonably hope to derive the least advantage from the enjoyment of its interesting and important privileges. To guard against this tendency of the mind to mingle earthly with spiritual thoughts, it is essential that we enter, at home, upon the discharge of those *preparatory* duties, to which I have already adverted.

b. Again : The knowledge acquired in reading the scriptures at home enables the hearer to follow understandingly, and without effort, the train of thought and argument which pervades the preacher's discourse ; whilst
 c. Fervent and importunate prayer for the enlightening influences of the spirit of truth, creates a willingness to listen to all the reproofs and counsels of infinite wisdom, and a desire to treasure up in the heart the momentous disclosures. "brought to light in the gospel."

2. Another result that may be mentioned, as flowing from the conscientious performance of the duties just enumerated, is, *the permanency of religious impressions*. Those convictions of moral obligation, experienced by many, when the "whole counsel of God" is faithfully declared, are too frequently banished from the mind, as soon as the preacher's voice ceases to vibrate

Q. Must our thoughts be worldly or spiritual when we enter the house of God? What does the knowledge acquired in reading the Scriptures at home enable us to do? As a hearer of the word, what advantage does the Christian derive from prayer? We have been considering one result which flows from the discharge of certain duties at home, previous and subsequent to the services of God's house; can you mention another result of the faithful performance of these duties?

on the ear. If such impressions are to remain, the individual who feels them, must retire from the sanctuary to the closet, and there pour forth the earnest supplication, that the truths communicated to his understanding may exert their saving influence upon his heart, and that neither "the cares nor pleasures of the world may prevent or impair their efficacy."

b. It is also highly important for every individual, after the services of the sanctuary are ended, to investigate more fully the subject of the preacher's discourse. Closely connected with such investigations is the reading of the Scriptures, which we are to search, for proof and illustration of the sentiments proclaimed from the sacred desk. This exercise of the mind, when prayerfully conducted, must result in lasting advantage to the heart, as it tends to give permanency to those convictions of duty, which the preaching of the word so frequently creates.

We may define the work of the Sabbath then to be the sanctification of our thoughts, (Lev. xi. 44.) And this work is performed in listening prayerfully to the truths of inspiration, reading the holy Scriptures, and singing the praises of God, and in the confession of sin, the offering of thanks, and supplication.

II. The profanation of the Sabbath consists

1. In the abuse of the means of grace.
2. In their neglect.
3. In the pursuit of sinful enjoyments.
4. In the performance of all evil or forbidden works.

Q. What should every individual investigate, after the services of the sanctuary are ended? In what will this exercise result, if prayerfully conducted? What may we define the work of the Sabbath to be? How is this work performed? In what does the profanation of the Sabbath consist?

1. The means of grace here referred to are the divine word—religious ordinances and prayer. We abuse the divine word, *a.* when we read or hear it without having our attention arrested, and feelings of devotion and love brought into active exercise. We also abuse the divine word, *b.* when we read or listen to it, with no higher aim than to impress others with the persuasion of our piety. *c.* We abuse the ordinances of religion when we think to do God service in attending the sanctuary, and perform this act as a kind of sin offering, so that the accusations of conscience may be silenced, whilst we continue to live in the indulgence of our guilty passions. *d.* We abuse the privilege of *prayer*, when in our supplications we forget our need of a Saviour, and when our offerings, like that of the Pharisee in the temple, (Luke, xviii. 10, 12,) afford no evidence of “a broken and a contrite spirit.” *e.* We also abuse the privilege of prayer when we perform this duty only “to be seen of men.”

2. Individuals manifest their contempt for the means of grace and thus profane the Sabbath.

a. When they neglect the reading of the sacred oracles. (Hos. iv. 6.)

b. When they refuse to visit the assemblies of Christians for edification. (Heb. x. 25.)

c. When they omit the duty of prayer.

3. *The pursuit of sinful enjoyments.* All pleasures that are inconsistent with moral duty, and are suggested by the depraved inclinations of the human heart, are of course prohibited at all times. But there are many grati-

Q. What are the means of grace? When do we abuse the divine word? When do we abuse the ordinances of religion? When do we abuse the privilege of prayer? When do individuals manifest their contempt for the means of grace? What else is forbidden in this commandment?

fications, innocent in themselves, which become sinful, when, on the Sabbath, they constitute the objects of pursuit or desire. Not to attempt an enumeration of these, the exercises of skating and bathing may be mentioned as examples. Music, whether vocal or instrumental, not associated with holy thought and pious emotions, is necessarily forbidden. Conversation when it has reference to these amusements, or to the ordinary business of life, is by no means favorable to devotion. In a word, all those diversions intended to relax and refresh the mind, as well as to invigorate the body, and which have their appropriate season, are not to mingle with the employments of that day, which has been consecrated to higher and nobler purposes. Indeed, in regard to the *mind*, there is nothing that tends more effectually to invigorate its powers, or to secure the most brilliant and desirable success to its efforts, than the relaxation it enjoys in the house of God, and that refined gratification which is administered, whenever its thoughts are elevated to the Supreme Intelligence, and its meditations are fixed upon his immutable law.

4. The remark that has been made in reference to sinful enjoyments, will apply to all *works* that are *evil in themselves*; they are opposed to the moral law, and are therefore prohibited at all times. But there are many necessary works which cannot be performed on the Sabbath consistently with moral duty. Such are all the customary avocations of life. Consequently the labors of the work shop and the field must be abandoned accord-

Q. Are there any gratifications, innocent in themselves, which become sinful when pursued on the Sabbath? What works are forbidden on the Sabbath?

ing to the command: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt do no manner of work."

Works not forbidden. Under this head may be classed the following: The care of all domestic animals; (Luke, xiii. 15.) the preparation of necessary food; (Matth. xii. 1.) all acts of charity; the healing of the sick, and so on. (Matth. xii. 10-13.)

5. *The duty of masters to servants, and of parents to children.* They are guilty of the violation of the third commandment, who cause others under their control to perform unnecessary labor on the Sabbath. This is expressly forbidden. (Exodus, xx. 10.) And all masters, parents and guardians, are required to grant to every individual under their influence, the full enjoyment of the means of grace. The domestics and youths of a family, though they occupy a subordinate station in this world, hold an important place on the scale of intelligent being, and are equally interested, with others of the human race, in the great salvation. And here it cannot be improper to remark, that Sunday school, Bible class, and catechetical instruction, should be encouraged by all Christian parents, guardians and others, as a means of grace that has been eminently instrumental in the conversion of immortal souls.

6. "*The cattle* must also be allowed to rest from the

Q. How many days are we allowed to labor? What works are not prohibited on the Sabbath? How are masters and parents often guilty of the violation of the third commandment? Where is this expressly forbidden? What are all parents and guardians required to do? Are the souls of servants and children of as much value as those of masters and parents? What kind of instruction should be encouraged by Christian masters and parents as adapted to the young? What must be done with our cattle on the Sabbath?

hard labor of husbandry, journeys, and all employments connected with trade or pleasure, though doubtless we may employ *them too* in works of necessity, piety, and charity."

7: Among the Israelites it was required even of *strangers*, who neither belonged to the nation, nor professed the same religion, to attend to those external rites and observances which belonged to the Sabbath, as long as they sojourned among the Jews. From this we may infer the duty of Christians to bring those who happen to be their guests on the Sabbath, to the house of God. Sunday visits cause many to neglect the public ordinances of religion, and the privileges of the sanctuary. To prevent this consequence, let Christians resolve, never to suffer the visits of their friends to interfere with the discharge of the various duties involved in this command. Let them repair, as usual, to the sanctuary, taking their friends with them, and these visits, so annoying to those who "love the gates" of Zion, will, in all probability, be discontinued, or if repeated, may result in permanent advantage to those who make them.

Festivals. There are certain days set apart by the church, in commemoration of various important events in its history. Such seasons, though not of divine appointment, should nevertheless be consecrated, *by those who observe them*, to holy meditation; inasmuch as they have been instituted to retain in perpetual and grateful remembrance, transactions of more than ordinary interest

Q. In what works may they be employed? What was required among the Israelites, in regard to strangers? What course should Christians pursue, when their friends visit them on the Sabbath? Are festivals of divine appointment? How should they be kept by those who observe them? For what purpose have they been appointed?

in the moral government of God. (Rom. xiv. 6.) The festivals observed by the Lutheran church in the United States are *Christmas*, (commemorative of the Saviour's birth,) *Good Friday*, (commemorative of his death,) *Easter*, (appointed to celebrate his resurrection,) *Ascension* day, and *Whit Sunday*, (in memory of the descent of the Holy Spirit, at the season of Pentecost.)

III. The consequences that flow from the profanation of the Sabbath, may be stated as follows:

a. Inattention to the means of grace.

b. Neglect of all religious duties.

c. Immorality of children and domestics.

d. The spread of infidelity in one or all of its various forms. When the Sabbath was abolished in France, the spirit of atheism stalked boldly forth, and the reign of terror commenced.

e. The unfitness of the soul for heaven.

f. The punishment that must follow every violation of the moral law, not cancelled by the blood of Christ. The observance of the Sabbath, so positively enjoined in the law, is a necessary part of Christian duty; and as its profanation betrays a want of respect for the requirements of God, it must incur his disapprobation.

IV. The results that attend the observance of the Sabbath, *in as far as they relate to the individual himself*, who is obedient to this command, have been already enumerated. To those previously mentioned may be added the following:

a. *If the heads of a family* are conscientious and

Q. What festivals are observed by the Lutheran Church in the United States? Of what is Christmas commemorative? Good Friday? Easter? Whit Sunday? What consequences flow from the profanation of the Sabbath?

faithful in the discharge of this obligation, a spirit of attention to the duties and observances of the Sabbath will in all probability; be created among all the members of their household.

b. The more general diffusion of religious knowledge. Mankind are influenced more or less by example. Were all the members of a congregation punctual and habitual in their attendance at the house of God, many who are now encouraged, by the example of professing Christians, to profane the Sabbath, and who consequently remain ignorant, in a great degree, of moral duty, would repair to the sanctuary, and in some instances would acquire, by this means, a saving knowledge of the truth.

c. Hence the spirit of infidelity and irreligion, if not entirely subdued, *would maintain more limited sway* over the human mind.

d. And it follows, that if the conscientious observance of the Sabbath results in consequences so important to the soul, *it must enjoy the approbation of the Almighty.*

V. In conclusion, it may be said, in regard to the duty inculcated in this command, that its performance alone can secure happiness to the soul, and that its neglect will lead to merited punishment. The law of God has been established with reference to the happiness of those whom it is intended to govern; and though we are re-

Q. If heads of families are obedient to this commandment, what will be likely to follow? How would the faithful attendance of Christians at church, contribute to the more general diffusion of religious knowledge? What effect would all this have upon the spirit of infidelity and irreligion? Hence, how must the conscientious observance of the Sabbath be regarded by the Almighty? What will obedience to this law secure? What will follow its neglect? With reference to what has the moral law of God been established?

quired to abstain on the Sabbath from our accustomed labors and pursuits, this cannot possibly result even in temporal loss or disadvantage. The operations of the divine government in nature are so arranged, that we may secure to ourselves, during six days of the week, all the blessings of Providence, as effectually as if the Sabbath were devoted to their attainment. During the wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness, a double portion of manna descended on the day preceding that which was sacred to the worship of their mighty deliverer. They were also commanded to keep the Sabbatical year, which occurred every seventh year, when the land was to enjoy a rest, and remain uncultivated. As long as they were attentive to this requirement, the blessings of Providence were scattered profusely around them. With its violation, their national reverses commenced, and they were sent into captivity, and their "land was brought into desolation." (Lev. xxvi. 34, 35. Neh. xiii. 16.)

Indeed, when we consider the positive advantages that flow from the institution of this day of sacred rest; how its observance tends to afford us enlarged and correct views of duty, in bringing us to the knowledge of the truth; how it prepares us to encounter anew the temptations of life, and how sensibly we experience the need of a Saviour, whilst we listen prayerfully and attentively to the solemn disclosures of divine revelation; when we further consider that the enjoyments of the Sabbath are emblematic of celestial bliss; that the bands of society

Q. Can abstinence from labor on the Sabbath lead to any possible disadvantage? What were the Israelites commanded to keep beside the Sabbath? What did they enjoy, as long as they were obedient to this command? What followed its violation? Recapitulate some of the advantages that flow from the observance of the Sabbath?

are insecure, unless cemented by the principles of that religion, which it is intended to perpetuate on the earth; and that its sacred privileges, if rightly improved, will impart to the soul a degree of spiritual light and hope, and joy, not to be acquired by any other means; when we consider all this, I say, it must be evident to every mind, that the obligation imposed in the command, "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy," is now as sacred as ever, and cannot be violated with impunity. In the language of another, "With the loss of the knowledge of God," (to which the abolition of the Sabbath would lead,) "all impressions of the divine presence, and all sense of accountableness for human actions, would be destroyed. The restraints of religion, and the prospect of a future judgment would no longer deter from the commission of crimes; and nothing but the dread of the dungeon, the gibbet, or the rack, would restrain mankind from the constant perpetration of cruelty, injustice, and deeds of violence. No social prayers, from assembled multitudes, would be offered up to the Father of mercies; no voice of thanksgiving and praise would ascend to the Ruler of the skies; the work of creation, as displaying the perfections of the Deity, would cease to be admired and commemorated; and the movements of Providence and the glories of redemption, would be overlooked and disregarded. The pursuit of the objects of time and sense, which can be enjoyed only for a few fleeting years, would absorb every faculty of the soul; and the realities of the eternal world would either be forgotten, or regarded as idle dreams." (Dick.) "Take this day from the calendar of the Christian, and all that

Q. What does all this prove?

remains will be cloudy and cheerless. Religion will instantly decay. Ignorance, error, and vice will immediately triumph; the sense of duty vanish; morals fade away; the acknowledgement, and even the remembrance of God be far removed from mankind; the glad tidings of salvation cease to sound; and the communication between heaven and earth be cut off forever." (Dwight.)

PRAYER.

My Lord and my God! I confess to thee that I have often esteemed thy word lightly, that I have heard it unwillingly, that I have not been diligent in the study of thy will, that I have not reflected upon it, at all times, with a heart-felt desire to be profited by its disclosures, and that I have not entertained in regard to it that unfeigned joy and love which I ought ever to feel. I confess that I have preferred the vanity of this world, though thy word is the most precious treasure that can be conferred upon man, and imparts the highest wisdom to which the human mind can attain. O forgive the carelessness I have manifested, and pardon my neglect of thy saving gospel! Forsake me not because I have forsaken thy truth! Create within me a holy longing for the bread of life, and a burning thirst for the waters of salvation! Grant that I may know *myself* and *thee*; my misery and thy mercy; my sinfulness and thy grace; my poverty and thy riches; my weakness and thy strength; my folly and thy wisdom; my darkness and thy light! O let me choose the better part, and sit at the feet of Jesus, to learn and obey his word forever! Blessed is the man who dwells in thy house! Blessed is the man who keeps thy word; for he will never see death! Blessed is he who delights in thy law, and who meditates upon it day and night! Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law! May this be my treasure, to obey thy will! Teach me to walk in the right path, and enable me to understand thy word! Let the law of thy mouth be more precious unto me than thousands of gold and silver, that I may learn thy statutes, and that it may be my joy and wisdom to obey them! Great peace have they which love thy law. O Lord, thy law cannot change, thy testimony is sure, thy requirements are just, and establish the heart. The commandments of the Lord are pure, and in keeping of them there is great reward. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer. Amen.

SECOND TABLE.

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT.

“Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.”

According to Luther this commandment signifies: “that we should so fear and love God, as not to despise or displease our parents or superiors; but honor, serve, obey, love and esteem them.”

That part of the moral law, already considered, embraces those obligations which all intelligent beings owe to the Creator; and it has been proclaimed to man, that he may regulate his conduct, in his intercourse with God, according to the same principles of action which control “the spirits of the blest.” It plainly enforces the duty of cultivating those feelings of reverence and love, which the revealed exhibitions of the divine character, afforded in the works of creation and redemption, are calculated to inspire. It teaches us that our best affections are to be given to Him, by whom we have been “so fearfully and wonderfully made,” and that we are to yield the most implicit obedience to all his requirements. Those precepts of the moral law already considered are indeed nothing else than amplifications of that first and great command: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength;” and they explain

Q. Repeat the fourth commandment. To which table does this commandment belong? How does Luther explain this command? To which of our duties does that part of the moral law, already considered, refer? Which is the first and great command? Do the three first commandments embrace any thing more? In what light then may they be considered? A. As explanatory of the manner in which our love to God is to be displayed?

to us how this affection for the Creator, is to be displayed.

The second table enforces the duties which we owe to our fellow-men; duties, whose performance is requisite to the existence and well-being of community, and indispensably essential to the highest degree of social enjoyment. The requirements which belong to this table are all based on the principle of universal benevolence; a principle, which must pervade all classes of society, before those acts of oppression and injustice, which now infuse bitterness into the cup of life, shall cease; and before that harmony of feeling, and unity of purpose, which the triumphant progress of Christianity is destined, eventually, to effect, shall be co-extensive with the habitations of mankind. When the obligation imposed in the command: "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," is universally acknowledged and discharged, "swords will be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not rise up against nation, neither will they learn war any more." That discord, which now so extensively prevails in families and communities, will die away, and a spirit of mutual forbearance, will contribute to the establishment of peace and concord among all the nations of the earth.

The fourth commandment inculcates the duty of *subordination*; and though it relates especially to the duty of children to parents; in a more general sense, it has reference to that respect, which all men owe to their

Q. What duties does the second table enforce? To what is the performance of these duties necessary? When they shall be faithfully discharged by all men, what will be the state of human society? What prophecy will be fulfilled? What duty does the fourth commandment inculcate? To what relation does it particularly refer?

superiors, such as governors, judges, and so on. The natural freedom and equality of all men is the fundamental principle of the Constitution of these United States. Hence, in our republic, all power is centred in the people, who elevate the individuals of their voluntary choice to offices of dignity and trust. But the moment any individual is legally appointed by the popular suffrage, to manage the affairs of government, or to administer justice, it becomes the duty of every member of community to treat him, in his official relation, with deference and respect. This spirit of subordination is essential to the order and the very existence of society. Without it, there would be no reverence for the laws; no security to personal right; and the spirit of anarchy would spread desolation throughout every scene of social harmony and bliss.

The *parental relation* is one of peculiar interest, and involves peculiar responsibilities. Every parent is at the head of a small sovereignty. In the earliest ages of the world, the patriarchal form of government was the only one that existed. And when we consider the influence which the parent exerts over the child, either "for good or evil;" how the habits, opinions and propensities, acquired by every youth, must eventually affect the general happiness; and that the welfare of community depends upon the wise administration of parental authority; it will not appear strange, that the precept, which enjoins the discharge of parental and filial obligation, should oc-

Q. To what does it refer in a more general sense? When any one is appointed to office, what is the duty of every member of community in regard to that individual? In what light do you consider the parental relation? Which is the most ancient form of government? On what does the welfare of society in a great measure depend?

cupy a distinguished place in the moral law. This command, which, as already stated, also inculcates the duty of subordination in general, has been assigned its appropriate rank, at the head of those injunctions, which relate to social intercourse, and teach the duty of man to man.

I. The obligation here imposed requires every child to honor its parents. Let us consider—

1. *The grounds of this honor.* These may be stated as follows:

a. Our parents have been instrumental in bringing us into life.

b. They have been our earliest benefactors. They have suffered many privations, and engaged in many acts of labor and self-denial to promote our happiness. They have guarded us from danger during the helpless period of infancy. They have watched, with tender solicitude, the gradual development of our bodily and intellectual powers. They have afforded us the means of acquiring useful knowledge. They have fed us, and clothed us. In a word, they have made our interests their own. A *mother's* love is proverbial: so intense in degree and lasting in duration, so gentle and forbearing under every manifestation of filial ingratitude, that it has been alluded to by the prophet, (Isaiah, xlix. 15.) for the purpose of exhibiting in a strong light, the long-suffering and affection of the Almighty.

c. Again: Parents have been placed *by the Creator*

Q. What, in the first place, does the obligation imposed in the fourth commandment require? What are the grounds of this honor? Mention the first ground. The second, and so on? Where does the prophet allude to a mother's love? Repeat the passage. What have parents been appointed by the Creator to do in their relation to their children?

in the relation which they sustain to their offspring, and therefore they ought to be revered and loved. They have been appointed *aa.* to dispense to their children the gifts of divine providence, comprising all the comforts and blessings of life; *bb.* to afford them the means of preparation for some one of the useful employments of life; *cc.* to attend to their mental and moral improvement that they may become the respected members of community, and be fitted to enter upon the scenes of a future world. Hence, being intrusted with these great and important duties, they have also—

d. Been endowed by the same authority with peculiar rights. Thus they may establish rules of conduct, and require the performance of whatever duties or services, they may think proper to impose. These regulations and commands, however, are to be at all times in agreement with the moral law of God.

2. The question now arises: What duties are enjoined in this requirement? It teaches us that we are to “honor, serve, obey, love, and esteem” those who sustain this interesting relation, and who have been appointed by the Creator, to the important charge of our present and eternal interests. In reference to the obligations here embraced, it may be well thus briefly to expatiate.

a. Honor. This implies that we are to reverence the character, the commands, and the will of our parents. We are to cultivate those sentiments of respect, and cherish those feelings of veneration, which their superior

Q. In the first place, (*aa.*) In the second place, (*bb.*) In the third place, (*cc.*) Having been intrusted with these great duties, with what *rights* have they been endowed? With what are the commands of parents to agree? The child is to *honor* his parents—what do you understand by this? What is the source of all voluntary acts of moral duty?

station, and the rights with which they have been invested by the Supreme Lawgiver, are intended to excite; and which are the source of all voluntary acts of moral duty.

b. We are also required to *obey* them. That is, we are to fulfil all their wishes and to execute all their commands. We are to regulate our conduct according to those restrictions which they have established, and which are essential to the wholesome administration of family government. And we are to discharge every obligation they impose, as long as they do not require us to violate the law of God.

c. We are further bound to *serve* them. That is, we are to embrace every opportunity of promoting their happiness. If possible, we are to anticipate their wants, and employ every effort of which we are capable, in order to lessen their anxieties, and alleviate their cares; and this, not only whilst under their immediate protection, but also when we are far from all the restraints of parental authority. It should be the pride and the joy, as it is evidently the duty, of every child, when his parents are in the decline of life, or when they have encountered the vicissitudes of fortune, to administer to all their necessities; not as if conferring an undeserved favor, but as the partial liquidation of a debt of gratitude, which no act of filial kindness and solicitude, can ever fully discharge. If children thus honor, obey, and serve their parents, they will also—

d. *Love* them. Every act of obedience, and every

Q. Children are required to *obey* their parents—what do you understand by this? Children are also required to *serve* their parents—what does this mean? What are children to do when their parents are in the decline of life, or when they are sick, or unfortunate?

manifestation of reverence, must be based upon affection, or it is altogether worthless, and cannot constitute the fulfilment of this part of the moral law. But that child must be ungrateful indeed, who can regard all the fond evidences of a mother's love, and all the tender proofs of a father's care, and not feel within his own heart, a corresponding affection.

3. How is this disposition to be cultivated?

a. By attending strictly to those statements of filial duty revealed in the Scriptures; and—

b. By fervent prayer for the aid of the divine spirit, that we may be enabled to obey this requirement of God.

4. *The promise*, (Eph. vi. 2, 3.) This is not to be regarded as idle or unmeaning; nor yet as depending for its fulfilment on those regulations which existed under the Jewish economy. (Death by stoning was the punishment of rebellious children among the ancient Israelites.) For if this spirit of filial reverence and fear is carefully fostered and exercised, it will result in the profoundest respect for the laws and institutions of human government. All those deeds of violence and injustice which are punished with imprisonment and death, are prompted by a spirit of insubordination. They originate in the contempt of all law, human and divine, and they betray the very disposition which is often manifested, in the utter disregard of parental authority. It is impossible

Q. If children thus honor, obey and serve their parents, what feeling will they cherish toward them? On what must every act of filial obedience be based? What is the right motive of obedience in all cases? A. Love. How is this filial disposition to be cultivated? In what respect is this commandment distinguished from the others? In what part of Paul's writings is the promise, attached to this commandment, alluded to? What punishment was inflicted upon rebellious children among the ancient Jews?

to decide how far, or in what precise manner, this promise is fulfilled in particular instances. But when, in connection with the foregoing observations, we bear in mind, that filial reverence and affection are associated with all the gentler emotions; that the child who honors his parents according to the spirit of this commandment, must necessarily love his God, and that a consequent serenity and peacefulness must be diffused throughout the mind and the heart; and when we remember, too, that this mildness of temper is really conducive to "length of days," there can remain no doubt of the actual and literal accomplishment of this assurance.

5. These feelings of reverence are also to be entertained in reference to—

a. Guardians, or those who have assumed the parental relation.

b. Teachers, including—1. Those in the higher seminaries of learning and in common schools, who have been intrusted with the duty of imparting to the minds of youth, the rudiments of a popular education; and also 2. The ministers of religion, whose communications to mankind are worthy of the profoundest attention, and whose office, as the ambassadors of the Most High, entitles them to universal respect.

c. Governors, judges, legislators, and all others who are authorized to institute, or administer the laws.

d. Servants should also honor their masters.

e. Tradesmen and laborers should respect the wishes, and obey the orders of their employers.

f. The young are also required to reverence the aged.

Q. For whom, besides parents, are we to entertain feelings of reverence? To whom besides guardians? To whom besides teachers? and so on. Whom should servants honor? Tradesmen and laborers? The young?

It follows, as a necessary consequence, that they whom we are thus required to honor, are obligated to render themselves deserving of this honor, and to be faithful in the discharge of those important responsibilities, which their several relations involve. And first, in regard to—

II. *The duty of parents.* Here it may be safely asserted that filial respect and obedience depend, in a great measure, on the strict performance of parental obligation. And though the neglect of parental duty constitutes no apology for the existence of a spirit of filial irreverence and disrespect, yet we can clearly trace, in many instances, the disobedience and waywardness of the child, to the neglect of intellectual and moral training at home, and to the utter ignorance of those principles of action which are revealed in the word of God, and which should be inculcated by all parents into the minds and hearts of their offspring. The nature of this duty may be referred to under the following heads: 1. Precept. 2. Example.

1. *Precept.* By this we are to understand, *a.* Religious instruction, embracing a description of the divine attributes, and of the nature and destination of the soul, together with the plan of redemption, and a full statement of those moral obligations which originate in the relation of man to his fellow-men, and his Creator, and of those personal duties, which every one owes to himself. This course of instruction must be commenced at the earliest possible age, and continued until the mind and

Q. What follows from all this? On what do filial respect and obedience in a great measure depend? To what may we often trace the disobedience and waywardness of children? Parents are to teach their children by precept and example—what do you understand by precept *a*? When must the religious instruction of the young be commenced?

the heart of the child are properly affected, and brought completely under the control of gospel principles and motives. It must be accompanied by prayer. Were all parents to bow down with their children before the throne of grace, the lessons of truth which they inculcate would be more lasting, and the impressions of duty thus fixed upon the mind more permanent.

b. *Admonition*, gentle and kind, though earnest, should follow these simple statements of duty. Every deed and every desire, at variance with moral obligation, should be stated and explained, and the wayward child should be checked without delay; its sinful character should be constrained, by tender expostulation, to walk "in the way he should go." The important truth must also be adverted to in these admonitions, that *God* is angry with the transgressor every day, and that they who are guilty of the wilful violation of *his* requirements, cannot hope to enjoy his approbation.

c. The language of *encouragement* must also be addressed to every child, who manifests in his actions a desire to regulate his temper, and to be directed in his pursuits, by the supreme will of the Almighty.

2. But these precepts will avail nothing unless they are enforced by *example*. The parent must display in all his conduct the value he attaches to these lessons of truth, and these suggestions of duty, else his instructions will have no other effect than to produce the impression of his own inconsistency. Children are careful observers. They scrutinize the actions of those around them with

Q. By what accompanied? What should follow the simple statements of duty *b*? If the child manifests a desire to do right, how must he be addressed *c*? How must these precepts be enforced? If parental precept is not enforced by example, what effect will the instructions of the parent produce?

an intentness of observation, of which we are apt to think them incapable; and this at a very early period of life. Whilst, therefore, we tell them to be kind, gentle, and affectionate, *we* must exhibit none of those feelings of anger, impatience and revenge, which *they* are taught to check and overcome. Even our chastisements must be inflicted in such a manner as to manifest a deep concern for their present and eternal well-being, (Eph. vi. 4,) and not so as to awaken within them emotions of bitter resentment and disaffection. And thus, when we endeavor to inculcate their religious obligations, we must afford them practical evidence that we are actuated by the love and the fear of God, and that his law is written within our hearts.

III. The faithful discharge of parental duty, as now stated, may be enforced by the following considerations:

a. The parental relation has been appointed by the the Creator, and therefore all the obligations it involves are of a most important and binding nature.

b. Parents *necessarily* exert a greater influence over their children than others. The very relation they sustain secures to them this influence. They are intrusted with the sole guardianship of their offspring; they are authorized to establish for them rules of conduct, and to enforce obediences to these rules; whilst *their* precepts and example are *most* familiar to the minds of their own children.

c. Consequently the usefulness and happiness of every child must depend, in a great measure, on the education

Q. When we tell a child to be gentle and affectionate, what feelings must we be careful to overcome? How must chastisements be inflicted? By what considerations may the faithful discharge of parental duty be enforced *a*? Who exert over children the greatest influence? On what consequently, do the usefulness and happiness of every child in a great measure depend?

imparted at home. It has been said with truth that early impressions are the most lasting. And the advice of inspiration is: "Train up a child in the way he should go," and the assurance is added, "when he is old he will not depart from it." (Prov. xxii. 6.) Those principles of action, established in the mind and heart during the years of infancy and childhood, will be very apt to constitute the rule of conduct through life. Indeed the connection that exists between the early moral and intellectual training of the child, and the usefulness of the man, is intimate and inseparable. Let the child be taught to reverence and obey his parents, and when he becomes a man he will reverence all who have been placed in authority, and yield implicit obedience to those laws which have been instituted to secure the peace and happiness of community. Let him be taught to cultivate feelings of gentleness, and forbearance, and forgiveness, at home, and these feelings will in all probability go with him into the world, and regulate his intercourse there. The same may be said in regard to his happiness, as a moral being, both in time and eternity. There are many who can trace their first impressions of duty to the pious instructions and example of Christian parents, and who have been thus persuaded to consecrate their youthful services to Christ. In this respect the parental relation imposes a heavy weight of responsibility.

d. Every parent *may* exert a decidedly beneficial influence. Though the fruit of their efforts to bring up their children in the fear of the Lord, and to educate

Q. If a child is early taught to reverence and obey his parents, what will be the probable result when he becomes a man? To what can many trace their early impressions of duty? Is it possible for every parent to exert a beneficial influence?

them according to the principles of his word, may not immediately appear, the impression of duty fixed upon their minds in youth, even if partially eradicated, will revive again in after life, with more than their original distinctness, and lead to the most favorable and blessed results. "It is reported of a man eminent for his talents, his elevated situation in life, and his dissipation, that one evening, while sitting at the gaming table, he was observed to be unusually sad. His associates rallied him upon his serious aspect. He endeavored, by rousing himself, and by sallies of wit, which he had always at command, to turn away their attention, and throw off the transient gloom. Not many moments transpired before he seemed again lost in thought, and dejected by some mournful contemplations. This exposed him so entirely to the ridicule of his companions, that he could not defend himself. As they poured in upon him their taunts and jeers, he at last remarked: 'Well, to tell the truth, I cannot help thinking, every now and then, of the prayers my mother used to offer for me at my bedside, when I was a child. Old as I am, I cannot forget the impressions of those early years.' "

All parents may derive encouragement from such examples, to enlist all their energies in the important duty of training up their children for usefulness in life, and preparing them for a blessed immortality in heaven. And, let it be remembered, that by pursuing this course, they will best secure to themselves that filial reverence and affection, which it is the object of this command to inspire.

IV. What has been said of parents, may also be said in reference to magistrates, and all others in authority.

a. They are obligated to honor the station to which they have been elevated, and thus to *deserve* that respect which every member of community is required to manifest. *b.* It is also worthy of remark, that the misconduct of our superiors should not lessen our regard for the offices they occupy, or the authority with which they have been invested. But *c.* in the appointment of individuals to offices of distinction, attention should be paid to moral principles and habits, as well as to talent and intellectual capacity. There can be no pledge of the stability of any government unless the principles on which it is based are in agreement with "the word of everlasting truth." And it is therefore highly important to the best interests of every government, that all those to whom the administration of its affairs is entrusted, should be eminent examples of Christian excellence; only ambitious to rule according to the dictates of impartial justice, and ever attentive to the requirements of Him who is the sovereign of universal creation.

V. These remarks will also apply in substance to those to whom the important work of education is committed. Our system of popular instruction is sadly deficient in many points of view, but its worst feature is the total exclusion of all moral and religious truth from the youthful mind. This is emphatically the case in reference to our common schools, where most children receive their only education. And in this respect the German system of instruction, of which the study of the sacred Scriptures forms an essential part, is far superior to ours.

Q. What may be said of magistrates and all others in authority? Should the misconduct of our superiors lessen our respect for their offices or authority? In the appointment of individuals to office, attention should be paid to what? On what does the stability of human governments depend? What is the worst feature of our system of popular education? What system is superior to ours?

Were all our schools opened and closed with prayer every day, it would exert a delightful influence upon the feelings of the scholars. They would be impressed with a sense of the all-pervading presence of Deity, and they would feel the need of his blessing in all their undertakings. The Bible ought to be a class book, and its most important and obvious truths ought to be constantly illustrated and enforced. And the works of nature, as exhibiting the power, wisdom, and benevolence of God, should be frequently adverted to by every teacher of youth, as interesting and worthy objects of contemplation. Christian parents should therefore make it a point, to confide the education of their sons and daughters to those, who will employ every effort to promote their moral as well as mental improvement. In this case, parents and teachers co-operate. Their united instructions, aiming to accomplish the same purpose, have an important bearing upon the everlasting interests of their immortal charge; and the judicious efforts employed at home, instead of being frustrated and counteracted at school, are seconded and rendered effectual.

The first and principal object of the fourth commandment is *to establish the kingdom of God in every family*; and the attainment of this object, as has already been demonstrated, chiefly depends on the faithful discharge of parental duty. And were this great and interesting end to be accomplished, by all those parents who profess to be actuated by the principles of the gos-

Q. How should all schools be opened and closed? What ought to be adopted as a class book? What should Christian parents make it a point to do? What is the first and chief object of the fourth commandment? On what does the attainment of this object chiefly depend?

pel, the sum of human enjoyment would be greatly increased. *It would create unanimity of sentiment and singleness of purpose in families.* Wherever the spirit of disaffection and irreverence prevails, there the prediction of the prophet is sadly verified: "The son dishonoreth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house." (Micah, vii. 6.) To guard against these results, so fatal to domestic enjoyment, it is only necessary for every child and every parent to be controlled by the love and the fear of God. Where these predominate, all the gentler emotions will be cherished, and feelings of mutual forbearance and affection will be constantly displayed. It is in the contemplation of such a scene of domestic bliss, that the mind perceives the beauty and the force of the language of the psalmist: "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity." (Psalm cxxxiii. 1.)

Again: Were the kingdom of God thus established in every family, the energies of the young, now too often wasted in pursuits of no ultimate advantage to the soul, and frequently destructive of its interests, would be secured to the cause of Christianity. Could this object be effected what a mighty impulse would be given to the efforts of the philanthropist and the Christian! And were every youth of the present generation, throughout the Christian world, thus influenced by the love and the fear of the Almighty, how soon would

Q. What would the attainment of this object create in families? When the spirit of disaffection and irreverence prevails in families, what prediction is verified?

“The heathen lands, that lie beneath
The shades of darkness and of death
Revive ——”

to behold the light and enjoy the knowledge of the truth.

In a word, such an event would be the signal for the universal happiness and holiness of all mankind. And did the principles of the gospel exercise their legitimate influence in families, wherever they have been proclaimed, parents would be honored, magistrates would be feared, the laws obeyed, teachers respected, masters esteemed, and the aged revered. A spirit of subordination would pervade all classes of community, and the whole human family would soon be united in the bonds of Christian fellowship and love.

PRAYER.

Father in Heaven, Lord of my life! Thou hast afforded us, in thy son Jesus Christ, the most perfect example of obedience. His will was entirely subject to thine, and he was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore thou hast exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I rejoice in this assurance, but at the same time I acknowledge my own disobedience and contumacy of heart toward my superiors, to whom thou hast placed me in subjection. I pray thee deal mercifully with me, and take from me the spirit of insubordination, that I may not suffer its merited punishment! Give me an obedient heart, that I may desire in all things to do thy holy will, and not my own; that I may take up the cross, and follow thee, and never murmur against thee! Enable me to regard my parents and all my superiors, as thy representatives, whom thou hast wisely appointed, that peace and happiness may dwell in our midst. Give that I may heartily love and honor them as thy servants, in word and in deed! May I be willing to excuse their faults, and whilst I overlook and apologize for these, may I patiently endure their chastisements, and listen to their admonitions. May I in all humility subject my will and judgment to theirs, and not despise their counsels; but

cherish at all times, according to thy will, a spirit of obedience and meekness! And do thou enable me, also, to obey thee rather than men, so that, guided in all my actions by thy law, I may praise, honor, and glorify thee, together with thy Son, and the Holy Spirit, forever. Amen.

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not kill.”

According to Luther, the purport of this commandment is, “That we should so fear and love God, as not to do our neighbor any bodily injury; but rather assist and comfort him in danger or want.”

This commandment is negative and contains a prohibition. In its most obvious sense it forbids murder, or the wilful and premeditated destruction of human life. The first act of this kind recorded in Scripture was committed by Cain upon his brother Abel. (Gen. iv. 8.) On this occasion the Almighty expressed his unqualified displeasure, and Cain was doomed to be “a fugitive and a vagabond” upon the earth. When Noah and his family came forth from the ark, permission was granted them to take of “the beasts of the field, and of the fowls of the air, and of all the fishes of the sea,” for food, but at the same time it was announced to them “Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed.” (Gen. ix. 6.) This injunction was again repeated at Mount Sinai, when, at the command of God, the Israelites were assembled at its base, to hear the

Q. Repeat the fifth commandment. What is the purport of this commandment? Is this commandment positive or negative? What does it forbid? Where is the first act of this kind recorded? By whom committed? How did the Almighty regard this act? What was said to Noah on leaving the ark?

proclamation of his will ; and amid the solemn and impressive circumstances of that occasion, it was incorporated in the moral law. Life has been given to man as an inhabitant of this world for three very important purposes : *a.* to enjoy the bounties and study the perfections of the Creator ; *b.* to perform his part as a member of the vast community around him ; and *c.* to prepare for the employments and joys of another existence. The love of life is deeply implanted in the human breast, that these purposes may be accomplished. And as the Almighty is its author, (Acts, xvii. 25,) it follows that he alone has the right of its disposal. (Deut. xxxii. 39.) This right has been delegated however to magistrates, (Rom. xiii. 4,) who, as guardians of the public safety and administrators of the laws, may condemn an individual to suffer death, who has been guilty of the violation of this commandment, according to Gen. ix. 6. In its most extended signification, it has reference to the needless and wanton destruction of *inferior animal*, and even *vegetable* existence.

The exposition of this section of the moral law is more fully embraced under the following heads.

a. As already stated, it prohibits murder. The awful character of this crime will be more fully apparent, if we bear in mind that, to terminate the life of any individual of the human race, is to separate him from every present source of sensitive enjoyment ; to sever him from all those interesting relations, which he sustains here below, and perhaps to send him without preparation into

Q. For what purposes has life been given to man ? Why is the love of life implanted in the human breast ? Who alone has the right of its disposal ? To whom has this right been delegated ? In its most extended signification, what does this commandment prohibit ?

the eternal world. Luther ranks the fifth commandment at the head of the second table; and Dr. Harnisch remarks in reference to this arrangement, that it has been assigned its appropriate place, inasmuch as it aims to secure to us, the chief of blessings.

b. All bodily injury which may affect the constitution and terminate in death, is also expressly forbidden.

c. To tempt others with the promise of reward, to engage in undertakings that threaten life, or in employments that are destructive of health, is to act in opposition to the spirit of this law.

d. It is forbidden to impose upon servants and others, labor too arduous to be performed. When the children of Israel were enslaved to the Egyptians, the latter were guilty of this in a wonderful degree. (Ex. v. 7.)

e. To set fire to inhabited dwellings, and thus to endanger the lives of their inmates, is justly regarded as a violation of this requirement.

f. It further prohibits the exposure of any one by stratagem in situations of peril. The transaction of David in regard to Uriah is a case in point. (2 Sam. xi. 15.) In this instance the deed was no less atrocious because performed by another, but, on the contrary, more aggravated, inasmuch as Joab became a participator in his sovereign's guilt.

g. We are also required, if possible, to render assistance to all persons who are in circumstances of danger. To regard with indifference the condition of those who

Q. Where does Luther rank the fifth commandment? What says Dr. Harnisch of this arrangement? What else is forbidden in this commandment, *b*? What else, *c*? What is forbidden in the fourth place, *d*? Mention an instance of this manner of its violation. What else is forbidden, *e*? What in the sixth place, *f*? Mention a case of its violation in this respect. What else is forbidden, *g*?

are in peril of their lives, can be considered in no other light than as a violation of this commandment. Dr. Harnisch refers, in illustration of this, to the conduct of those who live upon the sea coast, and who witness the loss of vessels and their crews, without making an effort for their rescue, only desirous of appropriating to their own use, the property that may be washed upon the shore.

h. It is forbidden to cherish feelings of revenge or enmity, which would be gratified in the personal injury of any individual.

i. It has been clearly demonstrated in many recent and overpowering arguments, that they who administer to the drunkard's appetite the means of its gratification, are accessory to his ruin, and to all the misery that flows from his mistaken course. It is a fact incontrovertibly established, and universally admitted, that alcohol is a poison, and that its habitual use tends to the prostration of the bodily and mental powers. It not only endangers life, but actually destroys the soul. And it is impossible to conceive how any one, who contributes in this age of light and information, to this twofold death, can repel the charge of infringing this sacred commandment.

k. Again, this precept forbids all conduct that threatens to dissipate the joys and increase the sorrows of the heart; for instance, the disobedience and cruel ingratitude of children to parents.

l. All wars, carried on merely for the sake of con-

Q. How does Dr. Harnisch illustrate this? What feelings are prohibited, *h*? Does this commandment condemn the conduct of the man who puts the bottle to his neighbor's lips? What is the nature of alcohol? What does it destroy? What else does this precept forbid, *k*? What else, *l*?

quest, or to advance the purposes of ambition, are expressly prohibited. The number of lives sacrificed in different ages and regions of the world to increase the glory of a conqueror, or to add to his dominions, is beyond all human calculation. The army of Xerxes alone, taking into account all the individuals who followed him into Greece, is supposed to have contained upwards of five millions of souls. Nearly all of this vast concourse were destroyed. Mr. Dick supposes that "*one tenth* of the human race has been destroyed by the ravages of war." And according to his estimate of the number "of men who have existed since the Mosaic creation, more than *fourteen thousand millions* of human beings have been slaughtered in war since the beginning of the world — which is about *eighteen times* the number of inhabitants which, at the present, exist on the globe; or in other words, it is equivalent to the destruction of the inhabitants of eighteen worlds of the same population as ours." What a fearful aggregate! And how sadly descriptive of that depravity of our nature, which has rendered necessary the command: "thou shalt not kill." Most of these wars have been commenced and prosecuted without any justifying cause, and consequently the guilt of all that devastation of life and happiness which has followed in their train, must fall upon those who have projected and encouraged them.

m. The practice of *duelling* is a plain violation of the sixth commandment.

n. There is also a *spiritual death*, and if the murderer is justly regarded as a dangerous member of com-

Q. How large was the army of Xerxes! What became of it! How many of the human race, is it supposed, have been destroyed in war! Are wars generally justifiable! What is said of the practice of duelling!

munity, and as the disturber of its peace, in what light are we to view the man, who promotes the everlasting ruin of the *immortal soul*. This is often accomplished *a.* by the circulation of infidel writings, *b.* the language of the profane and licentious, *c.* the inconsistency of professed believers, (Matth. xv. 12-14.) and, *d.* the evil examples of the despisers of God.

2. *Suicide*, or self-destruction is also forbidden in this commandment; *a.* because it is a violation of the principle of self-love; and *b.* because the Creator alone, as the giver of life, possesses the right of its disposal. Examples of this crime are afforded in the death of Saul, (1 Sam. xxxi. 4.) of Judas Iscariot, (Matth. xxvii. 3-5.) and of Ahithophel. (2 Sam. xvii. 23) In addition to these direct and premeditated acts of self-destruction it is forbidden —

a. To engage, merely for the sake of emolument, in employments that threaten to shorten life; for instance, to volunteer in the service of war, not from a sense of duty, but from motives of self-interest.

b. Every excess in eating and drinking is contrary to the spirit of this commandment. The glutton and the drunkard will unquestionably stand charged on the last great day, with the crime of self-destruction. And in this connection it cannot be improper to remark, that it is the obvious duty of Christians to aid in promoting the objects of temperance associations, which aim to avert the evils of drunkenness, and to banish them forever from the world.

Q. How may men contribute to the ruin of the soul? Why is suicide forbidden? What else is forbidden, *a*? What else, *b*? Of what are the drunkard and the glutton guilty?

c. We are also forbidden to indulge in *immoderate mirth* or *grief*, as both these emotions, if violent and unrestrained, interrupt that gentle, healthful flow of feeling, so essential to "length of days."

d. The strictest attention to the *capability of our bodily powers*, and to their *proper exercise*, is positively required. Hence, we are not to engage in labors too arduous to be endured, nor are we to cherish a spirit of idleness and inactivity. Persons engaged in sedentary employment are therefore *morally obligated* to establish for themselves a regular system of appropriate exercise; thus imparting health and vigor to the body, as well as strength to the mind. To the neglect of this duty may be attributed many of those diseases which prey upon the human system, and bring with them premature dissolution.

e. It is also forbidden to follow pursuits, or to cherish feelings, which tend to make us forgetful of moral duty, and thus bring destruction upon the soul.

f. There are circumstances which *justify the exposure of life*, namely, when it is required by the will of the Almighty. (Luke, xii. 4, 5.) Thus Christ laid down his own life to atone for human guilt. And thus many have become martyrs to the cause of truth. There is also a greater or less degree of peril in arresting the progress of the devouring flames; in affording relief to the shipwrecked mariner, and so on. But as long as this peril is encountered in obedience to the imperative calls of duty, it enjoys the approbation of the Divine mind, and

Q. What is said of immoderate mirth or grief? Why are they forbidden? To what are we to pay the strictest attention? What feelings and pursuits are prohibited, e? What circumstances justify the exposure of life?

the individual who meets it, has every reason to confide in Almighty protection. (Matth. xvi. 24, 25.)

3. Cruelty to *inferior animals*, and even the smallest insect is expressly forbidden, because *a.* they have been constituted by the Creator for the purpose of sensitive enjoyment, and *b.* like man himself, they are susceptible of pain; every unnecessary infliction of which, as it opposes the benevolent design of God, must be regarded as a direct violation of his law. Animals may be destroyed, *a.* when they are required for food; or, *b.* when they endanger property or life; but even then, with the smallest possible infliction of pain.

4. Nor are the *productions of the vegetable world* to be wantonly destroyed, inasmuch as *a.* they contribute materially to supply the wants, and to minister to the enjoyments of man, and are necessary to the support of many species of inferior organized existences. The flowers of the field charm the eye with their beauty, regale the sense of smell with their delicious odor, and deal out their sweets to the industrious bee. Hence they answer a very important and interesting end in the economy of nature. To all the objects embraced in the vegetable kingdom, such as trees, plants, grain, grass, and so on, the general observation will apply, that they have been created for purposes the most important to innumerable multitudes of sensitive beings; and the wanton and needless destruction of any of these objects is morally wrong, because it interferes with the wise

Q. For what did Christ lay down his life? In what may he confide, who exposes his life at the call of duty? Why is cruelty to animals and insects forbidden? When may animals be destroyed? In what manner? How is it in regard to the productions of the vegetable world? Why are they not to be wantonly destroyed?

and merciful arrangements of an overruling Providence. In connection with these considerations it may be remarked, that *that* policy of *war* cannot be too severely censured, which lays waste the fair fields of a conquered province, at the mere dictate of a spirit of oppression, whose insatiable desires are unlimited and uncontrolled. The Scriptures go so far as to prohibit the *inappropriate use* of "trees bearing fruit," and forbid that they should be employed for the purpose of blockade. (Deut. xx. 19.)

5. It is *required* of us in this commandment that we endeavor to promote the *temporal* and *spiritual* interests of those around us.

This concern for the temporal happiness of our fellow-men may be manifested *a.* toward the sick, and *b.* the needy. (Isaiah, lviii. 7.) "Deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out to thy house. When thou seest the naked cover him; and hide not thyself from thine own flesh." Dr. Harnisch remarks in reference to this duty, that "we are not by any means to give encouragement to those who eat the bread of idleness. Every one who is able to labor ought to labor; and every Christian is obligated, to direct those who are in health, to sources of profitable employment. The sick and the helpless alone, are to be immediately aided by our gifts." The children of the poor, the aged, and the unfortunate, are therefore worthy objects of charity.

Nor is this disposition, to promote the present good of

Q. What do the Scriptures prohibit in reference to trees bearing fruit? What is required of us in this commandment? Toward whom may our concern for the temporal happiness of our fellow-men be manifested? Are we to support the idle? Who are worthy objects of charity?

others, to be manifested by the *wealthy alone*; it is also to be cultivated by the *poor man*, who, though incapable of extending to the needy any actual relief, can still cherish those feelings of sympathy, which are the source of every desire, to lessen the miseries, and multiply the joys incident to man. (Rom. xii. 15.)

b. But if it is required of us to be ever attentive to the temporal happiness of others, we should be much more concerned for their *spiritual*, that is, their everlasting interests. The ruin of the soul involves all actual enjoyment in this world and in the world to come. And as its salvation is not only possible, but of easy attainment, if the proper means are employed, the Christian should aim to promote the holiness and the joy of those around him; who, in consequence of their own acts of moral violation, are exposed to the penalty of sin, which is *eternal death*. This duty the Christian performs—

a. When he reproves the sinner for his guilt, and warns him of his danger.

b. When he directs his attention to the means and conditions of his reconciliation with God, as they are revealed in the sacred Scriptures; namely, Faith in the atoning merits of Christ, an humble and prayerful reliance on the enlightening, regenerating, and sanctifying influences of the divine spirit, and obedience to the moral law.

Q. By the exercise of what feelings may the poor man manifest a disposition to promote the temporal good of others? How should we regard the spiritual welfare of our fellow-men? What does the ruin of the soul involve? What should the Christian do? When does he perform this duty? To what danger is every impenitent sinner exposed? What are the means and conditions of his reconciliation with God?

c. When he exhibits a pious example, and finally—
 d. When these efforts are accompanied by the prayer that they may prove effectual in the conversion of souls; directed by the wisdom, power and goodness of the Almighty.

PRAYER.

Thou, O Lord, art the giver of every good gift, the fountain of life, the preserver of all being; in thee we live, and move, and have our existence. Thy mercies are new to us every morning, and thou givest life and motion, strength and beauty, health and safety to all thy creatures around us. Thou impellest the earth so that it moves in its orbit, and thou providest a covering for the worm. I would imitate thee, and having received life, I would labor to preserve it, and render it useful. May my own life be precious in my sight as thy gift; may the life of my neighbor be sacred to me, because thou hast imparted it! I would support the weak and uphold those that are bowed down. Enable me to light again the smoking flax, and to shield the broken reed from the storms and tempests of the world!

O Lord my God, my life is thine, the life of my brother belongs to thee; thou hast given existence to the plants, and breath and motion to every beast and insect, and thou fillest the earth with the choicest blessings. How can I destroy what thou hast created? How can I spoil that which enjoys thy protection, or despise that in which thou delightest? O purify and renovate me, I beseech thee, that I may be full of that life which thy Son Jesus Christ brought upon the earth, and thus learn to honor and protect every creature of thy hand. Amen.

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery.”

We are to understand by this commandment, “that we should so fear and love God, as to live chaste and undefiled, in thoughts, words, and deeds, and that each

Q. What example must the Christian display? By what must his efforts be accompanied? Rehearse the sixth commandment. What do you understand by this commandment?

should love and honor his wife or her husband." (Matt. v. 28; 1 Cor. vi. 18, 19; Eph. iv. 29, 30; also, v. 3, 4; Gal. v. 19.)

This prohibition is intended to secure the faithful discharge of those obligations which arise out of the marriage state, and to promote the happiness of those who sustain the conjugal relation, as well as the general peace and well-being of community. It is a relation from which every other emanates, and forms the very basis of the social system. And as it needs no argument, to prove that the foundation must be firm, or the superstructure cannot endure, so all the other relations of life would be disregarded, and society would present a scene of universal confusion and terror, were the sacred and inviolable obligations of the marriage state to be overlooked and set at nought. This we may learn, if we contemplate the practical results of the law established in France, in reference to *divorces*, soon after the commencement of the French revolution. The number of divorces granted in a short period of time, is almost incredible, and the consequence has been a wide-spread *licentiousness*, which still marks and disgraces the national character.

This section of the moral law leads us to consider, firstly, *marriage*, in reference to, *a*, its institution; *b*. its design; and, *c*. its importance.

a. We learn from Genesis ii. 21, 22, that marriage was instituted immediately after the creation of man. From the very nature of the union then established by the Creator, no earthly tie can be more sacred or interesting.

Q. Is it positive or negative? What is it intended to secure? What law was passed in France soon after the commencement of the French revolution? What was the consequence of the many divorces granted according to this law? When was marriage instituted? Where do we learn this?

(Gen. ii. 24.) The same record teaches us, that marriage originally consisted in the union of one man with one woman, and therefore the arrangement now established, and legalized among all civilized nations, evidently accords with the benevolent intentions of the Almighty. *Polygamy* has existed even among the Jews, and many eminent characters mentioned in Scripture, are said to have had a multiplicity of wives, and even concubines. (1 Kings xi. 3.) But this practice, like that of divorce, was suffered on account of "the hardness of their hearts," and not because it was agreeable to the holy will of God.

b. One important *design* of this institution unquestionably was, to establish a social relation the most endearing, and to secure to mankind the rich and varied enjoyments of domestic life. These enjoyments may be said chiefly to consist, *a.* in the unreserved and mutual interchange of sentiment; and, *b.* in the exercise of the benevolent affections.

2. Another design of marriage is expressed in the command of God to our first parents: "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." (Gen. i. 28.) From the conjugal relation, the parental and filial relations are the first that emanate, and they who sustain to each other the relations first mentioned, have been appointed by the great Arbiter of all events, to bring into life beings, endowed like themselves, with intellectual and spiritual powers, to educate them for usefulness in the world, and to train them up for a blessed immortality in heaven.

c. The *importance* of this institution may be safely in-

Q. In what does marriage consist? Is polygamy sanctioned in the law of God? Why was it suffered among the Jews? Mention one important design of this institution? Mention another. A. The birth and education of children. What may be inferred from the foregoing considerations?

ferred from the foregoing considerations. Büchner says: "Marriage is the chief among all human relations, holy and honorable, necessary and useful; because it is the origin of all ranks (die pflanzstätte aller stände) and has for its object, *a.* the worship of God; *b.* the increase of the human race; *c.* the education of children; and *d.* the alleviation of toil and the division of labor." *Parental* influence, in its remote and multiplied bearings, has been already considered, (vide 4th Com.) and no relation here below can be invested with greater consequence, than that which involves the destiny of a world.

2. The importance of the conjugal relation is also evident from the place assigned to this commandment in the moral law. Luther remarks in his Larger Catechism: "These (namely the fifth and sixth) commandments have their appropriate arrangement." And he reasons thus: they are designed to guard man from every species of injury, the one relating to his own person, and the other having reference to those domestic ties, which cannot be severed without destroying the chief good of life. The opinion of Philo and Tertullian, that the sixth commandment ought to rank *before* the fifth, is based on a similar argument.

II. *The prohibition.* When entering into the marriage relation, the governing principle should be *love*. (Eph. v. 25.) And this affection should be based on the knowledge of the moral worth of its object, in as far as such knowledge can be acquired. This alliance is not one which may be dissolved at the pleasure of the par-

Q. What does Luther say in reference to the fifth and sixth commandments? What is the opinion of Philo and Tertullian? On entering the marriage state, what should be the governing principle? On what should this affection be based?

ties; it is formed for life. If marriage, therefore, is not a union of affections and interests, it cannot be a source of domestic enjoyment. The great misfortune is, many are prompted to form this sacred connection either, *a.* by covetousness; or, *b.* a feeling of admiration for mere external beauty, without any reference to moral or intellectual culture; or else by some other motive, to whose impulse it is equally wrong to yield. The marriage relation, when formed under these circumstances, can only be productive of disappointment and regret. Marriage may also be rendered unhappy by great disparity, *a.* of age; *b.* of religious belief; or, *c.* of education and habits in general. And these may be mentioned as some of the causes, which often lead to the violation of this commandment.

The prohibition includes adultery, fornication, and all those acts which are embraced under the general name of lasciviousness. And this section of the moral law may be violated, *a.* in deed, (2 Sam. xi.); *b.* in word; (Gen. xxxix. 7.) under this head we are to rank all writings of a licentious character; *c.* in thought. (Matth. v. 28.)

Divorce. This was common among the Jews, but the practice did not escape the express censure of Christ. And when the Pharisees plead the authority of Moses in its vindication, he plainly tells them that "Moses suffered them to put away their wives because of the hardness of their hearts; but that from the beginning it was not so." The only legal ground of divorce is stated in Matthew,

Q. If marriage is not a union of affections and interests, what follows? By what are many prompted who enter the marriage state? By what other circumstances may marriage be rendered unhappy? What is included in the prohibition? How may this section of the moral law be violated *a.*, *b.*, *c.*? What was common among the Jews? How did Christ regard the practice? What did he say in reply to the Pharisee?

xix. 9. But even should a separation take place under these aggravated circumstances, the question arises, is it right for the Christian to marry again? Luther says in reference to this question, that "they who call themselves Christians (and sustain the conjugal relation,) should remain united to each other through good and evil, and even suffer conduct that may appear extraordinary and defective; or if separated (under circumstances that seem to call for and justify such a course) the believer *should not again form a similar connection.*"

III. *The duty enjoined* in this commandment. The marriage vow is one of solemn and weighty import, and it requires the reciprocal exercise of reverence and love. (Eph. v. 33.) It involves obligations the most sacred and interesting; and did there exist a more general attention to these obligations, and were all who have assumed them to "love and esteem" each other in conformity with their solemn and voluntary promises, there would exist a new and a better state of things in every department of society, and the sum of human happiness would be greatly increased. In proof of these assertions, the following may be stated as among the results which flow from the faithful discharge of the duty inculcated in this commandment.

a. Domestic enjoyment. The secure possession of this, is an antidote against the harsh vicissitudes of life, a covert from its severest storms. Nor can the joys of *home* fail, if those who have entered the marriage state (to adopt the language of our excellent liturgy,) "over-

Q. Where is the only legal ground of divorce stated? What says Luther in regard to this? What does the marriage vow require? Mention one of the results that flow from the faithful discharge of the duty inculcated in this commandment.

look each other's infirmities, cherish a due regard for each other's opinions and feelings, and are just to each other's virtues and good intentions." In such a case, their union becomes a source of holy joy, "and perfect indissoluble friendship," and the "persevering affection" manifested by each, tends "to soften the unavoidable cares of life, to alleviate its sorrows and to increase its innocent enjoyments." The universal cultivation and exercise of this spirit of mutual forbearance and tenderness, is indispensable to the establishment of peace and concord among all the families of the earth.

b. The proper education of children. As has already been demonstrated, this is one of the most sacred and important, among the many duties, which grow out of the conjugal relation. But *a.* it is vain to look for the successful performance of this duty, whilst the obligations involved in the marriage relation, are disregarded. For how can parents teach their children to love each other, or bring them under the influence of judicious restraint, as long as their own purposes are at variance, and their feelings are marked by a spirit of dissension? *b. Forbearance and confidence,* based upon affection, are also necessary to the proper administration of family government; for instance, as regards the punishment of children. When one parent thinks it right to inflict chastisement, the interference of the other must exert a decidedly evil tendency. The child, who witnesses this interference, is apt to consider its punishment unjust,

Q. What is indispensable to universal peace and concord among all the families of the earth? Mention another result of the faithful discharge of conjugal duty *b*? Why ought parents to exercise forbearance and confidence toward each other? If one parent punishes a child and the other interferes, what follows?

and consequent feelings of irreverence and disaffection ensue. Such a course of procedure, on the part of either parent, betrays a want of "due regard" for the "good intentions" of the other; for where this regard exists, even should the punishment seem to be ill-timed and unnecessarily severe, the impression of its injustice will be carefully concealed from the knowledge of the child. *c.* Nor is it to be supposed, finally, that *religious impressions*, or a *sense of moral obligation*, will be permanently fixed upon the filial mind, unless parents exhibit, in their mutual intercourse, the practical influence of "the perfect law of God."

c. The faithful discharge of the duty inculcated in this commandment, will also *contribute to the advancement of those who perform it in the divine life.* (Eph. v. 25.) In illustration of this point, Tertullian remarks as follows: "The wishes of those who sustain to each other the conjugal relation (if they are the disciples of Christ,) have *one* aim and are based upon the *same* hope; they listen to the same instructions and serve the same master. The union of the spirit, like that of the flesh, is intimate; there is *one* spirit and *one* flesh. They read, together, the holy Scriptures; they pray together; they fast together; they mutually instruct, admonish, and sustain each other; together they visit the sanctuary, and approach the table of the Lord; they share every want, every duty and every joy. Unitedly they chant their psalms and hymns of praise, and emu-

Q. Should one parent consider the punishment which the other inflicts, unjust or unnecessarily severe, what course ought he to pursue? If parents wish to fix religious impressions upon the minds of their children, what must they exhibit in their mutual intercourse? To what else will the faithful discharge of the duty inculcated in this commandment contribute?

late each other in their acts of devotion to God. Christ rejoices when he beholds and listens to those who thus yield to his will; to such he sends his peace. Where two are united in his name, there he dwells. Where he dwells, evil is unknown."

IV. 'This conjugal affection *is to be especially manifested* in sickness, or when the misfortunes of life are multiplied and frequent.

V. *They* perform these duties best, who fear and love God, and regard in its true light, the sacred character of the marriage relation, and who exercise continually a spirit of watchfulness and prayer. (James, v. 16.)

It is presumed that the general hints here thrown out, in reference to a subject which may well be termed of paramount importance, are sufficient to suggest to our minds, the necessity of the strict observance of the marriage vow, to the best interests of society, and the happiness of all mankind. Our own observation has undoubtedly convinced us, that much of the misery which exists in the world, is to be traced to the violation of this vow, in some one of the many ways in which it may be broken. What is the cause of that discord which exists in families, and of the consequent unhappiness which ensues? Is it not an utter, or a partial inattention to those acknowledgements and promises, which are made between husband and wife when they enter into the marriage relation? Jealousies, and petty dissensions arise, which neither party seeks to remove or allay; mutual recriminations follow, until every vestige of peace is banished from the domestic circle,

Q. When is this conjugal affection to be especially manifested? Who perform best the duties of the marriage state?

and the spirit of discord reigns triumphant. Here, again, is a husband, the father of a family, who brings disgrace, by his conduct, on all the members of his household, and thus violates all those sacred duties which grow out of the most endearing relations of life. Under these circumstances, how can domestic enjoyment prosper? Or how can the conjugal union contribute to lessen the ills and increase the enjoyments of life, until it becomes a union of hearts and affections? Too much care cannot be taken, by those who sustain this interesting relation, to exercise towards each other feelings of tenderness and forbearance, and to pursue that line of conduct, which will impart an interest and a charm to domestic intercourse, and constitute the joys of home, the most animating and delightful, experienced here on earth. The marriage relation was instituted by the Creator to be a source of the purest happiness to man, and if it becomes a source of misery and wretchedness; if its original design is perverted, it is the fault of that depravity of heart, which leads many to spurn all the innocent and sanctioned gratifications of virtue, and to obey the suggestions of Satan, and bow to the influence of sin.

2. As regards the education, the future usefulness, and the consequent happiness of children, nothing can be plainer, than that the marriage vow imposes a sacred and binding obligation. In virtue of the relation in which parents stand to each other, the intellectual and moral improvement of each succeeding generation, is mainly entrusted to their charge. But it has been already shown, that parents cannot impose upon their offspring the wise restraints of parental authority, nor induce them to love each other, or promote each other's enjoyment, unless

their own passions are first brought under control, and unless *their* mutual intercourse is marked by a spirit of forbearance and affection. And hence it follows that were *all* parents forgetful of the obligations peculiar to the marriage state, and were all to violate them, a spirit of inattention to the most obvious duties of life would control each succeeding generation; children would everywhere imitate the practices of their fathers; the spirit of forbearance, benevolence, and forgiveness, would wing its flight from the earth; and all the darker passions of the soul would reign unbridled and uncontrolled. This is the way in which the iniquity of the father is often visited upon the children, "unto the third and fourth generation." The influence of parental example is felt by one generation after another, and when this example is opposed to the will of the Almighty, whole communities and even nations become eventually the revilers of God, and learn to despise his holy law. Such was emphatically the case with the Israelites. Nor can it be denied, that, *wherever* the spirit of dissension and hostility exists between the heads of a family, the children of such a family will become disobedient, the servants irreverent and careless of duty; all government will be destroyed, and scenes of confusion and disagreement between the various members of the household will perpetually occur. How different the scene where husband and wife are of one mind, aim continually to promote one design, and act according to the law of love established in this commandment. And how delightful the influence of such agreement and unanimity upon all the members of such a household. Children grow up in the fear of God; servants reverence their masters, and respect all the insti-

tutions of religion, and peace and friendship pervade the hearts, and cement the affections and interests of all.

3. And finally, in regard to the spiritual improvement of both parties, and their advancement in the divine life, how essential is the faithful discharge of every duty which belongs to the marriage state. The sanctified husband may be a blessing to the unsanctified wife; and the sanctified wife may be a blessing to the unsanctified husband; but when *both* are sanctified, how plain and easy the path of moral duty appears. Together they bow before the family altar, and bring their united offerings to God; together they direct their offspring in the path of virtue, until all delight in the same duties, and are animated by the same hope. When, oh when will such scenes of domestic bliss be universally displayed throughout the whole earth! I answer, when the kingdom of God shall be established in every heart. Then will the incense of grateful praise arise from altars erected in every family; then will fathers everywhere teach their sons the love and the holiness of the Creator, and instil into their minds those principles of action which are revealed in his perfect law; then will the earth be consecrated, a temple to Jehovah, and then will the voice of millions, redeemed from the power and slavery of sin, "ascend in one loud chorus to the skies."

PRAYER.

Give me, O Father, a clean heart; create and renew a right spirit within me; the spirit of abstinence and moderation, the spirit of gentle and unspotted innocence! If thou dost not change and purify my heart, the mere outward observance of this law, can be nothing else than sheer dissimulation. Cleanse me thoroughly, that I may be ever averse from all improper words and actions! Extinguish within me all evil desires, and shield me from every temptation; inspire me with pure thoughts and a pure love, and banish from within me, the lust of the world and the flesh! May a single moment of spiritual joy be far more precious to

me, than the indulgence of sinful inclinations! Take up thine abode in my soul that I may become holy; for without thee I am nothing; thou upholdest me by thy power. Let thy spirit dwell within my heart, that no common or unclean thing may enter, and there may the flame of celestial love burn clear and bright! Remind me continually of the holy example and innocent life of thy Son, and make my body the temple of the Holy Ghost, that it may be a temple of honor! Then wilt thou delight in me, and I in thee, and in the purity of my own heart will I behold a faint image of thyself. O it is blessed indeed to be able, in all things, to obey thy holy will. Enable me thus to bring my own will in subjection to thine, and unto thee, Father, Son and Spirit, will I ascribe all the praise. Amen.

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not steal.”

This commandment signifies, “that we should so fear and love God, as not to rob our neighbor of his property, or bring it into our possession by unfair dealing, or fraudulent means; but help him to augment and protect it.”

This section of the moral law leads to the consideration of,

I. *Property*, in reference to, *a. what the term embraces*; also, *b. in reference to its transfer*; and, *c. the inequality of its distribution*.

a. Under the general term property, are included all earthly possessions, such as money, houses, lands, apparel, domestic animals, together with the productions of the vegetable kingdom, grain, grass, etc. *Character*, or *reputation* may also be referred to under this head. To rob an individual of this, is to take from him what is of more value than countless wealth. (See 8th Com.)

Q. Rehearse the seventh commandment. What does this commandment signify? What is included under the general term property?

b. Property may be legally *transferred* 1. by inheritance; 2. as a free gift; 3. by way of exchange or sale; and 4. as the price for labor.

c. In reference to the *inequality of the distribution* of property, it may be observed, that when this inequality results from its legal transfer, in any one of the ways just mentioned, it may be safely regarded as an arrangement of the Almighty. As the disposer of all events, He may be said to regulate, by these means, the concerns of mankind, in respect to their earthly possessions. He deals to some a greater, and to others, a less share of the gifts of his providence. But as all these allotments are dictated by infinite wisdom and benevolence, the believer is not to repine, if his worldly circumstances are less propitious than those of many around him. Nor is there such a great disparity in the present condition of mankind as often appears at first view. For it must be remembered, that riches are themselves, a source of great temptation, (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10,) and that the poor man often possesses what the rich would give all their wealth to obtain: health of body, peace of mind, and the favor of God. (Prov. xxviii. 6.) Hence, a *sudden reverse* of fortune may be intended to recal our wandering affections to the Almighty. These considerations should make every one *contented* with the circumstances of his earthly condition, and *grateful* for those allotments of providence which have fallen to his share.

Q. How may property be legally transferred? Some men are rich, and others poor — when this inequality of condition arises from the legal transfer of property, in what light are we to regard it? By what are the allotments of providence dictated? Of what are riches the source? Where do we learn this? In the possession of what are the poor often favorably distinguished from the rich? For what may a sudden reverse of fortune be intended? What influence should these considerations have upon us?

II. *The prohibition.* Stealing, may be defined to be the appropriation of our neighbor's property or possessions to our own use, without his knowledge or consent; or by means of fraud. This commandment prohibits therefore, not only those violent acts of plunder which come under the cognizance of human laws, and which are punished by imprisonment, and in some countries even by death; it also forbids us to obtain the property of others under false pretences. Under this head may be mentioned—

a. The false representations of merchants and others, as to the value of their goods, etc., thus imposing upon the ignorant and credulous. (Jer. ix. 5.)

b. The use of false weights or measures. (Deut. xxv. 13-15.)

c. Usury, together with *extortion* of every kind. The meaning of the latter term may be in part illustrated by the case of an individual who purchases the property of his neighbor under circumstances of misfortune, at a price far less than its actual value. Such an individual speculates on the misery of his neighbor. And though such transactions may be honorable in the estimation of the world, and enjoy the sanction of human laws, they are nevertheless morally wrong, and opposed to the righteous law of God. (Ex. xxii. 25.)

d. The act of purchasing, without the prospect or intention of making payment. (Ps. xxxvii. 21.)

e. Gambling. (2 Thess. iii. 11.)

f. Smuggling, or any other evasion of the payment of taxes.

Q. How may stealing be defined? What does this commandment therefore prohibit? Mention a case of obtaining property under false pretences *a*? Mention another *b*? Another *c*?—and so on.

g. *Breach of Trust*, or embezzlement.

h. *Prodigality*.

i. *Idleness*. The loss of time, includes the loss of all the good, which its wise improvement might secure to ourselves and others.

III. *Causes and consequences of violation.*

a. *Discontent* with the allotments of providence, may be regarded as the chief cause that leads to the violation of this commandment. *Riches* do not always quell these feelings of dissatisfaction; on the other hand, the wealthy are often so completely ruled by avarice, as to set every principle of justice at defiance in the pursuit of gain; and they too frequently endeavor to increase their wealth, by adopting some or all of the illegal means, already enumerated. (1 Tim. vi. 9, 10.) *Poverty* may be often traced as the result of idleness, or prodigality, in which case it cannot strictly rank among the dispensations of the Almighty.

As discontent frequently incites to the violation of this law, so a spirit of *contentment*, based upon love and confidence toward God, will most effectually guard the soul against all temptation to commit the sin herein prohibited. (1 Tim. vi. 6-8.) This must be accompanied however by industry and diligent attention to business, (Prov. xxviii. 19,) which generally result in the acquisition of a competency of the gifts of providence. We should also be influenced, in our transactions with others, by a sense of strict and uncompromising justice, so

Q. What is a chief cause of the violation of this commandment? Do riches always make their possessor contented? By what are the rich frequently controlled? To what may poverty be often traced? What is the influence of contentment? By what must this feeling be accompanied? In what do these generally result?

that in the smallest matters we may act an honest and upright part. (Prov. xxi. 15.) It is evident of course, that we must be guided and controlled by the spirit of love. (Rom. xiii. 10.)

b. Consequences. The violation of this commandment *aa.* leads to the commission of other crimes; *bb.* results in the loss of reputation; *cc.* destroys the peace of conscience; and *dd.* incurs the displeasure of God. (1 Cor. vi. 10.)

IV. *The requirement.*

That great principle of action — “Do unto others as you would wish others do unto you,” clearly points out to us our duty, in reference to the property or worldly possessions of our neighbor. It teaches us —

a. That we are to guard and defend them in every time of danger, according to Deut. xxii. 4, “Thou shalt not see thy brother’s ass or his ox fall down by the way and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.” It is also enjoined upon us to make every reasonable effort to save the property of others from fire, or shipwreck, or the aggressions of thieves and robbers.

b. When we see our neighbor negligent of business and threatened in consequence with poverty and want, we are to admonish him of his carelessness, and point out to him the way of escape from the loss and ruin with which he is threatened.

c. We are also to aid others to *increase* their property. This may be legally done 1. by directing them to

Q. By what must we be influenced in small matters? By what spirit must we be controlled? To what does the violation of this commandment lead? What does this commandment teach us to do *a*? When we see our neighbor negligent in business, what are we to do?

sources of honest gain; 2. by the sacrifice of personal advantage; (Gen. xiii. 8, 9.) 3. by giving advice to the ignorant and inexperienced, admonishing the careless, and warning the prodigal; 4. by affording facilities to those about to enter into business, who, though destitute of means, are upright and persevering. "Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away." (Matth. v. 42.)

Deeds of charity in general, may also be embraced under this head. (Heb. xiii. 16; Isaiah, lviii. 7.) It is *not* permitted however to injure some, in order to promote the good of others. For instance, it would be decidedly wrong, and a plain *violation* of this law, to steal from the avaricious man his useless wealth, for the purpose of affording relief to the poor.

V. *The manner in which we are to obey this requirement.*

All deeds of charity and benevolence should be performed—

a. *Without ostentation.* "He that giveth, let him do it with simplicity." (Rom. xii. 8.) "When thou doest alms let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; that thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly." (Matth. vi. 3, 4.) Luther says: "To give with simplicity signifies, that we should not seek honor, favor, thanks, or reward, nor be influenced by the gratitude or ingratitude of the objects of our benevolence; but that we should give freely what we have to be-

Q. How may we aid others to increase their property? What other deeds may be embraced under this head? What are we not permitted to do? How should all deeds of charity be performed? Quote a passage of Scripture to prove this. By what is our benevolence to be regulated?

stow, even as God himself scatters his favors every day, and causes his sun to shine, notwithstanding the unthankfulness of man, as if his eye could not penetrate the soul. *He* manifests simplicity of heart and motive, who desires and seeks nothing but the glory of God, and is controlled entirely by his will."

b. Our benevolence is to be regulated by our *ability*. All are required to obey this law, in as far as they can, for even the smallest deed of charity, like the widow's offering, (Mark, xii. 42-44,) is acceptable to God. (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3.)

VI. Although this commandment, in its most obvious sense, simply prohibits the unjust appropriation of our neighbor's property to our own use, it also serves to warn us of the tendency of an inordinate love of wealth, in reference to our spiritual interests. Although conscience may not charge us with the violation of this law, the question arises: Are we not apt to regard our riches, instead of the Creator, as the primitive and the only source of all our blessings? It becomes us therefore—

a. To listen to the emphatic language of Christ: "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God." (Mark, x. 24.) It becomes us also—

b. To exercise a spirit of watchfulness and prayer, that our best affections may not cling to the perishing treasures of this world. (Ps. lxii. 10.) And finally—

c. To regard our wealth, not merely as affording us

Q. Is the smallest deed of charity acceptable to God? When, or under what circumstances? Of what does this command warn us? Whom are we to regard as the source of all blessings? To what does it become us to listen *a*? What spirit should we exercise *b*?

the means of sensitive enjoyment; but chiefly, as so many talents committed to our trust, for whose improvement we will have to render an account on the last day. (Luke, xii. 48.)

PRAYER.

Holy and righteous God: I confess unto thee that I am by nature, prone to be unjust, selfish, deceitful, and false; I confess that I have often offended thy justice, and acted in opposition to its requirements, and notwithstanding the knowledge and conviction of duty, I have been more careful to promote my own advantage than that of my neighbor. O thou! who condemnest all iniquity, pardon my transgression of thy righteous law! Measure not unto me, with the measure with which I have measured unto others! But give me a new, pure and understanding heart—a heart ever mindful of thy commandments, and inspire me with a holy zeal, that I may aid the administration of justice, and stand in defence of truth, and let me not seek to promote my own interests, unlawfully, under the mere semblance of right! Teach me to pity and sympathize with the needy, and in a spirit of gentleness may I mitigate as far as possible, the stern inflictions of justice by acts of love and mercy, that thus, mercy and truth may meet together, and righteousness and peace may kiss each other. Grant me a charitable disposition that I may rejoice to do good unto all men, without the expectation or hope of reciprocal advantage; influenced alone by the spirit of disinterested benevolence and the requirements of thy will! Help me to realize that what I possess is not mine, but thine, and that thou hast appointed me thy steward! May I ever remember the declaration of thy word, that it is better to *give*, than to *receive*, and that thou lovest a cheerful giver! Enable me, by thy grace, to sow bountifully now, that I may reap bountifully hereafter! Amen.

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”

This commandment is *negative*. Its *general* object

Q. In what light should we regard our wealth? Rehearse the eighth commandment.

is, to inculcate the duty of strict adherence to *truth*, in reference to all subjects, and to every species of conduct. It aims to secure the fulfilment of all vows, promises, and contracts, and requires of every one the correct and unexaggerated statement of all the facts of experience and observation; whether they relate to science, to the history of nations and countries, or to personal character. In a particular and more limited sense, however, it has reference to—

1. *Individual reputation*, and requires, “that we should so fear and love God, as not to belie, betray, slander, or raise injurious reports against our neighbor; but apologize for him, speak well of him, and put the most charitable construction on all his actions.”

a. All slanderous reports are herein expressly forbidden, as well as all insinuations, calculated to exert an evil tendency, in regard to our neighbor’s reputation.

b. It is also enjoined upon us, not to withhold whatever *praise* is due to those around us. The spirit of envy maintains such control over the feelings of many, that they refrain from speaking of the virtues of others, lest their own should appear insignificant in the contrast. Nothing can be more strongly indicative of an unchristian spirit.

c. Neither are we to *circulate* reports injurious to the reputation of our neighbor, which we know or suspect to be false; nor even if true, unless peculiar circumstances demand it. (Prov. xviii. 8.) It is therefore evi-

Q. Is this commandment positive or negative? What is its general object? What does it aim to secure? In a particular and more limited sense, to what has it reference? Hence what does it require? What are therefore expressly forbidden *a*? What is enjoined *b*? What does envy indicate? What else is forbidden *c*?

dently wrong, and opposed to the spirit of this commandment, to cherish that love of gossip and backbiting which is exhibited in almost every circle. Nothing is more common, indeed, than for individuals to advert to the failings and short-comings of others, with a kind of satisfaction which too plainly evinces the love of self, and a perfect insensibility to their own inadvertencies and sins. There are circumstances, it is true, which render it our duty, to make known whatever information we possess, in regard to the conduct of wicked men. If, for instance, an individual is *dishonest* to such an extent as to injure community, we are obligated as members of that community to proclaim his dishonesty to the world, that others may be on their guard, or else to the ministers of justice that his deprivations may be checked. Or if we hear one individual slander the character of another, we are bound to communicate the slanderous report to the injured party, that he may have an opportunity of repelling the false charge preferred against him; unless the slanderer should be so notoriously base and infamous, as to render all his false reports against others harmless; in which case the concealment of the slander would be justifiable, as it would lead to no evil result. But it is evidently wrong to make the little failings of others the topic of conversation. In this case the individual who is the subject of our remarks falls very far, in our estimation, even below the point where he ought to stand; for in the mutual interchange of sentiment on such a topic, there is more or less exaggeration, and the faults of our neighbor are painted in colors far too glaring to be consistent with truth. And besides, it should always

be remembered that there is no one, so free from fault, as to escape the animadversions of those who are inclined to canvass the merits of human action; and whilst we are perhaps adverting, with undue severity, to the deficiencies of others, our own conduct may be the subject of remark and ridicule in some other quarter. But let it be borne in mind, that these remarks have no reference to any course of action injurious to community at large; for as vice, in the abstract, ought ever to be censured, so the conduct of the wicked ought to be pointed at, as an example to be shunned by all who have their own peace and the welfare of society at heart. Thus parents may direct the attention of their children to individual examples of wickedness, and warn them against pursuing a similar line of conduct. The great difference between such animadversions and tale-bearing or slander, lies in this—the latter is dictated by feelings of envy or malice, whilst the former are prompted by feelings of benevolence, and a desire to promote the general good.

d. It is also wrong to condemn the *motives* of those who pursue an upright and honorable course of action. (Matth. vii. 1.)

e. Many violate this commandment by their very looks, as when they smile contemptuously on hearing the character and motives of another applauded.

f. To testify falsely in courts of justice, is expressly forbidden, and constitutes, indeed, an *aggravated* infringement of this law; inasmuch as such testimony frequently involves, not only reputation, but even property

Q. Is it right to condemn the motives of those who are upright in conduct? How do many violate this commandment *e*? What is said of false testimony in courts of justice?

and life. The sanctity of an oath is often violated ; and “to restore oaths to a greater degree of that reverence in which they were held by ancient nations, is a grand *desideratum* in legislative policy.” (Michaelis in Jenks. Prov. xix. 5.)

g. It is required of judges and jurors to weigh with impartiality and judgment, the mass of conflicting evidence on which their decision generally depends. (Prov. xvii. 15.)

h. The *press* calls loudly for reformation in reference to the violation of this law. No sooner is an individual proposed for election to some public office, than the opposing party make every exertion to ruin his reputation and destroy his popularity, by concealing every good and amiable quality of his character, and inventing numberless misrepresentations, exaggerations and falsehoods.

II. *Self-preference*. This may be regarded as the chief cause of all those slanders, backbitings and insinuations which so extensively prevail, even in enlightened society ; and is therefore expressly forbidden. It is this that prompts us to detect and expose the least fault in others, whilst we overlook, in ourselves, the most glaring sins. (Luke vi. 41, 42.) In order to guard against this disposition, it is necessary for us to enter frequently upon the duty of *self-examination*, as this will make us familiar with our own moral deficiencies, and lead us to judge charitably of the inadvertencies of others. (Gal. vi. 3, 4 ; 2 Cor. xiii. 5.) This exercise will beget a spirit of

Q. What is required of judges and jurors ? What is said of the press ? What may be regarded as the chief cause of the violation of this command ? Whilst we expose the faults of others, what are we apt to overlook in ourselves ? Upon what duty should we enter in order to guard against this ? What will this exercise beget ?

humility, and enable each one of us to “esteem others better than himself.” (Phil. ii. 3.)

III. *The requirement.* The golden rule “Do unto others as you would wish others do unto you,” when applied to character, teaches us that we should be as careful to protect our neighbor’s reputation as we are to defend our own. We are therefore—

a. To speak well of whatever is commendable in others.

b. To regard what is censurable with an eye of charity, and to attribute, if possible, the inadvertencies of those around us, to an error of the judgment, rather than to the wilful malice of the heart. (1 Cor. xiii. 7.)

c. It is also required of us to reprove *secretly*, and in a spirit of kindness, those who are regardless of their own reputation. Even in reference to those who are the professed disciples of Christ, we are expressly commanded not to publish their moral deviations to the church or the world, before we have employed every exertion to win them back to the path of duty, by personal entreaty and private expostulation. (Matth. xviii. 15, 16.) In a word, the spirit of *love*; that spirit which “suffereth long and is not easily provoked,” must regulate our conduct in this respect, as well as every other; and whilst “in our own case, we all feel the excellency and reasonableness of the precept in its strictest sense; whilst we value and are tender of our reputation; and expect, nay demand, to be treated with candor, respect,

Q. What does the golden rule teach, when applied to character? What are we therefore required to do *a*? How are we to regard what is censurable? How are we to act toward those who are regardless of their own reputation? How are members of the church to be dealt with, when guilty of a fault? By what spirit are we to be actuated in this respect? What is said of this love, or charity, in 1 Cor. xiii. 4?

and sincerity," we should, in the case of others, "vindicate and excuse what may be vindicated and excused, and conceal what may be lawfully concealed; and in every respect consult their reputation, and rejoice in their credit and renown."

IV. *Truth in general.*

a. The *importance* of truth will appear evident, if we take into consideration that it is *the basis of all our hopes of eternal enjoyment*. Were it not for the conviction that the records of the Bible are authentic, and relate occurrences which actually took place, all our expectations of happiness, depending on the history of the sufferings and death of Christ, would vanish from the mind.

b. Truth is equally important, *in the ordinary transactions and occurrences of life*. It is essential to the establishment of that feeling of confidence between men of business, which regulates commercial intercourse. Were it not for this, no reliance could be placed upon the promises of debtors to their creditors, and frauds would be so extensively practiced, as to interrupt and entirely destroy the present system of business operations. And thus in regard to all the relations and transactions of life; were truth universally disregarded, all confidence in the most solemn assurances, would be destroyed; and the warmest professions of friendship and love would be suspected.

c. On the other hand, were truth *universally loved*, the happiness of the human race would be promoted to a degree, only equalled by that which prevailed in the

Q. From what may we infer the importance of truth *a*? Why is truth important in the ordinary business of life? What would be the consequence were truth disregarded? How would it be, were truth universally loved?

soul before sin corrupted the moral purity of man ; and scarcely surpassed by that which is experienced among “the spirits of the blest.” In such a case, one individual would place implicit reliance on the assurances and promises of another ; all reports injurious to the reputation of any, would forever cease ; and every one, faithful to himself, would cast frequent glances of scrutiny within, and learn to make the correction of his own faults, a duty of paramount importance.

And, what is of greater consequence still, no one would consent to *impose upon others*, or *deceive himself*, in regard to the momentous disclosures of divine revelation. As it is, many are persuaded to “believe a lie,” either by means of the arguments of false teachers, or the suggestions of their own deceitful hearts. And thousands, who enjoy the full light of the “sun of righteousness,” and whose every action is opposed to the requirements of the moral law, are crying to themselves “peace, peace,” whilst the testimony of inspiration is: “There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.” (Jer. vi. 14.)

PRAYER.

I confess and lament before thee, O God, that the spirit of falsehood has corrupted my heart, and that I have not loved the truth as I ought. O forgive this my sin, and save me from its punishment, for thou hast threatened to destroy the liars, and hast declared that the deceitful are an abomination in thy sight.

O keep my heart and my mouth from lying, and grant, I pray thee, that the spirit of truth may enlighten my understanding, and that I may follow wherever it leads, uninfluenced by falsehood and error.

May I not flatter or deceive myself, but may I be enabled to pass an impartial judgment upon my own character, and may all my thoughts

Q. What do false teachers persuade many to believe? What is the testimony of Scripture in regard to the wicked? Where recorded?

and desires be regulated by the love of truth alone. Keep my mouth from deceit and my lips from lying, and grant that they may utter nothing else than what the heart feels. Preserve me from the sin of bearing false witness against my neighbor, and may it ever grieve me to listen to the voice of slander, and to hear the motives and actions of others misinterpreted and unjustly condemned. May I be faithful to all my engagements, and promise nothing that I am unwilling to perform. Grant me a true and living faith, that I may study thy word with joy and obey it with cheerfulness, and grant me a true knowledge of thy word, and a firm attachment to its principles, that I may be able to vindicate and defend it, and not shrink from any danger to which my love of it may expose me. Impart to me every true christian virtue, that my devotion to thy service may not be formal, but heartfelt and sincere, and inspire me with the fervent love of thyself, that my piety may be without dissimulation. Give me a discerning judgment that I may estimate all things rightly; enable me to read without prejudice, to act with discretion, to think with candor; and thus prepare me to dwell forever in the kingdom of everlasting truth, for the sake of Him who loved us and gave himself for us. Amen.

NINTH AND TENTH COMMANDMENTS.

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house.” (Ninth.)

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.” (Tenth.)

It is enjoined in the ninth commandment “That we should so fear and love God, as not to cherish improper desires for the inheritance or estate of our neighbor, or aim at obtaining it by deceit or the false appearance of a legal right; but be ready to assist and serve him in the preservation of his own.” (Micah, ii. 1, 2; Romans, vii. 7.)

Q. Rehearse the ninth and tenth commandments. What is enjoined in the ninth commandment?

It is required of us in the tenth commandment "That we should so fear and love God, as not even to wish to seduce our neighbor's spouse, to corrupt or alienate from him his servants, or to force away from him or let loose his cattle; but rather to use our endeavors, that they may continue with, and discharge their duty to him." (James, i. 14, 15; Rom. viii. 13.)

The ninth and tenth commandments establish, conclusively, the truth, that external conduct is not necessary to the infringement of the moral law, but that the very thoughts and purposes of the mind, if evil, deserve the penalty of transgression. (Matth. v. 28.) Motive or desire is the spring of action. "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies." (Matth. xv. 19.) And hence there may exist an evil state of the moral feelings; of the desires and purposes of the soul, whilst the actions of an individual are, themselves, agreeable to the will of the Creator. This we learn from the history of Cain, whose sacrifice the Lord did not respect. (Gen. iv. 5.) And the Pharisees, whilst offering their prayers in the temple, and at the corners of the streets, *coveted* the praise of men. These precepts therefore, are worthy of special attention, inasmuch as they aim to purify the heart, the very fountain whence every action flows; to change the character of those sinful inclinations, which

Q. What is required of us in the tenth commandment? What truth do these commandments establish? What gives rise to action? In what does every action opposed to the law of God originate? How then does the Almighty regard those desires and inclinations which lead to acts of disobedience? May the heart of an individual be sinful while his actions are agreeable to the will of God? From whose history do we learn this? What do these two precepts aim to purify?

impel to every species of conduct, prohibited in the moral law.

I. *Covetousness*. Under this head may be classed all those sinful desires which lead to the violation of the divine requirements. *Avarice* however, or the inordinate love of wealth, is commonly regarded as being chiefly prohibited in these precepts of the moral law. *Ambition*, or the love of power; and envy or discontent at the prosperity or moral excellence of another, are but modifications of covetousness, and the total exclusion of all such feelings from the heart, is therefore expressly commanded.

II. *Objects of desire*. Under this head may be enumerated, *a. wealth*, as the means of procuring all temporal good; *b. power* and *influence*, at the acquisition of which ambition constantly aims; and, *c. reputation*, or the good opinion of those around us. It may be well to remark here, that wealth, influence and reputation are all worthy objects of desire and pursuit, as long as the feelings which prompt to their attainment do not exclude from the soul supreme love to God, and disinterested benevolence to man. But when those feelings degenerate into avarice, ambition, and envy; and when wealth, influence, and reputation among men, become objects of inordinate and exclusive attachment, the law of God is broken, and the soul is exposed to the penalty of its violation.

III. *Means of attainment*. *Avarice* prompts to ly-

Q. What may be classed under the head of covetousness? According to its popular signification, to what does the term covetousness refer? What other feelings are but modifications of covetousness? Mention some of the objects of covetousness. When are wealth, influence and reputation worthy objects of desire and pursuit? To what does avarice prompt?

ing, fraud, extortion, stealing, perjury, murder, the profanation of the Sabbath, and the exclusion of God from the soul; the schemes of *ambition* often require in their pursuit the raising of armies and the contest and bloodshed of war; whilst *envy* is ever active in self-praise, and delights to misrepresent the motives, destroy the influence, and depreciate the talents, or moral worth of others. Thus covetousness if cherished and gratified, must result in the violation of all the commandments, embraced in the moral law.

IV. *Every unlawful inclination and passion ought to be subdued.* The truth of this proposition will be evident, if we bear in mind that all sinful desires, as long as they are unrestrained, impel to a course of action at variance with the divine law, and consequently destructive of the peace of conscience, ruinous to the interests of the soul, and injurious to the welfare of community. And there is,

1. A powerful *motive* which urges upon every one the discharge of this momentous duty. God is *omniscient*; and there is no secret of the human heart concealed from the knowledge of HIM whose eye scanneth creation at a glance, and who is familiar with every intent and purpose of man. (Jer. xvii. 10: 1 Cor. 4, 5.)

2. *Means to be employed.* aa. There must be a daily contest between the spirit and the flesh. (Rom. vi. 12: Eph. iv. 22.) And this contest is extremely *difficult*, nor

Q. What do the schemes of ambition require? In what is envy active? If these unlawful passions and inclinations lead to the violation of all the precepts of the moral law, what ought to be done? What great motive urges upon us the duty of quelling every sinful passion and desire? Repeat a passage of Scripture to prove that God is acquainted with the secret counsels of the heart. What means are to be employed to overcome our sinful desires?

can it be carried on with any hope of triumph, unless the moral strength and courage, necessary to success be sent down from above; for sin is deeply rooted in the soul, and holds supreme dominion over all its powers. (Gen. viii. 21 : Rom. vii. 23.) Indeed, it is scarcely less difficult for the sinner to become *persuaded* that this contest with himself is *absolutely essential* to his moral freedom, and eternal joy; because man is by nature spiritually blind, and in consequence of this peculiarity of his constitution as a moral being, he is not impressed as he ought to be, with the danger of cherishing those evil inclinations, which tempt him from the path of duty. (Eph. iv. 18.)

Reflections like the following are therefore highly important; and, if prayerfully conducted, will excite us to engage in this contest with the unlawful passions and desires of our own hearts, until they are completely and forever vanquished.

a. Whenever we give the reigns to these evil passions and desires, we inflict serious injury upon ourselves; conscience becomes seared, and a forbidden course of action follows.

b. Those evil examples, which generally succeed the indulgence of evil thoughts, exercise a baneful influence upon others.

c. The divine displeasure, and the penalty of sin, must inevitably result from the violation of these commandments.

Q. Is the contest between the spirit and the flesh difficult or easy? Whence must we derive the strength necessary for this contest? Why is it extremely difficult? What is the result when we give the reins to our evil passions and desires? What are the fruits of evil thoughts? What influence do these evil examples exercise upon others? What must inevitably result from the violation of these commandments?

d. The *divine love* provides for us every *necessary* comfort and enjoyment as the reward of our exertions, and therefore we have no reason to covet the possessions of others. (Ps. cxlv. 16.)

bb. Another *means* of guarding against every species of covetousness, is to be diligent in the discharge of the duties imposed by the relations we sustain, and the condition we occupy in life. (Industry.)

cc. A spirit of watchfulness must also preside over our most secret thoughts, whilst our ceaseless prayers ascend to heaven for the restraining and invigorating influences of the Holy Ghost. (1 Thes. v. 6. 7.)

V. *The requirement.* *a.* *The duty enjoined* in these commandments is, the *purification of the heart*. He alone whose soul is free from the control of every debasing passion, can render obedience to the holy law of God; and the gospel therefore requires every one to cultivate those pure affections, and to cherish those holy desires, without which no one can exercise supreme love to the Creator, or disinterested benevolence to man. For it is certain that every feeling of covetousness has a direct tendency to make us unjust and cruel in our intercourse with those around us; nor can the Almighty occupy the highest place in our affections, as long as we feel an inordinate attachment for any one, or all of the enjoyments of sense. (Psalm xxxvii. 4.) "No man can serve two masters." (Matth. vi. 24.)

b. *The consequences of obedience to this requirement.*

Q. Why have we no reason to covet the possessions of others? How are we to guard against covetousness *bb*? What spirit must we exercise? For what must we pray? What duty is enjoined in this commandment? What is the tendency of every feeling of covetousness?

1. *Love to God.* This is a necessary result of the purification of the heart. When the heart is impure, *the love of sin* pervades it; suggests all its evil thoughts, and gives impulse to every action opposed to the moral law. But when the heart becomes pure, *the love of holiness* is its controlling principle; which is in fact, the love of God, and exhibits itself in the most devoted attachment to all his precepts.

2. *Contentment* with the allotments of providence, and unlimited confidence in the assurances of divine protection.

3. Benevolent desires *in regard to others.* Benevolence and selfishness are opposite principles. The latter is perfectly consistent with a state of sin, and with every emotion of covetousness; the former is inseparable from a state of holiness. Selfishness is a peculiar trait in the moral character of devils and wicked men; benevolence belongs to the nature of angels, and is exercised by all the inhabitants of heaven, and all the saints on earth. Gentleness, long-suffering, and brotherly-kindness are but modifications of this holy principle, and these are all the fruits of that spirit, whose work it is to purify the soul of man.

4. Holy and lawful desires *in reference to the objects of individual pursuit.* If the hearts of all men were

Q. Mention one of the consequences of obedience to these requirements. When the heart is impure, what pervades it? When it becomes pure, what is its controlling principle? Mention another consequence of obedience to these requirements, 2. Another, 3. What principle is opposite to benevolence? With what is selfishness consistent? Whose character is distinguished by selfishness? Whose by benevolence? Mention some of the modifications of benevolence. Whose work is it to purify the soul? Mention a fourth consequence resulting from obedience to these requirements.

free from the control of evil inclinations, every forbidden course of action would be shunned; all the gratifications of sin would be carefully avoided; wealth would be sought, not as the means of selfish delight, but chiefly for the purpose of carrying on extended schemes of benevolence; feelings of envy, hatred, and revenge would be subdued; and it would be the aim of every personal effort, to secure the greatest possible amount of good to mankind in general, and to promote the glory of the Highest.

PRAYER.

O Lord, my God, if thou art my all, what more can I desire, or what greater happiness can I wish to enjoy? Thy presence renders all things lovely; when thou art absent, nothing can afford real pleasure to the soul. Thou makest the heart quiet and tranquil, and thou createst within it that peace which passeth all understanding. Without thee nothing can long delight us, nor can we truly relish any enjoyment that is not provided by thy wisdom, and sanctified by thy grace.

My God and my all! O delightful thought; but only for him whose affections are given to thee, and who loves not the world, or the things of the world! Purify my desires, that I may praise thee in all things; and instead of giving the chief place in my heart to any created object, may I ever look up to thee, the Creator, as the source of all good.

The wisdom of this world is foolishness with thee, and they who are in the flesh and seek only the gratification of their lusts, find nothing but vanity and death. But they who seek thee alone are brought from the ways of folly into the paths of truth, and translated from the slavery of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

O Sun of Righteousness, let thy beams shine into my soul and penetrate the secret recesses of my heart! Purify, sustain and quicken my spirit, that it may be my joy to walk in thy light and follow after thee! O when will that happy day arrive, when I shall be satisfied with thy presence, and when thou wilt be to me, all in all! The old man still dwells within me, nor is he yet crucified and fully destroyed; he yet rises, strong and unsubdued, against the spirit, and

Q If the hearts of all men were free from the control of evil inclinations state more particularly what would follow.

carries on an internal contest, so as to interrupt the peace of my soul.

But thou who commandest the swelling sea, and stillest the raging of its waters, arise and help me! Destroy all my sinful inclinations, and subdue me by thy power! Display thy wonders, O Lord my God, and let the glory of thy righteousness be manifest in me! For thou art my only hope, and thou alone art my refuge! Amen.

The Lord saith concerning these ten commandments, which constitute the moral law: "I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

We learn from this declaration, that—"God threatens to punish all who transgress these commandments: we should therefore dread his displeasure, and not act contrary to his laws. But he also promises grace and every blessing to all such as obey these laws; we should therefore love and confide in him, and cheerfully do what he has commanded us."

I. To guard against all misapprehension it may be proper to state that the doctrine of *imputation* is by no means taught, when it is said that the iniquity of the fathers is visited upon the children. No one will be punished for sins which he has never committed. "The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of

Q. What says the Lord God concerning these commandments? What do we learn from this declaration? What do you understand by the doctrine of imputation? Can you quote a passage of Scripture to prove that this doctrine is not taught in the word of God?

the wicked shall be upon him." (Ez. xviii. 20.) But children often suffer in consequence of the guilt of their parents, when they learn to *imitate their wicked examples*; and it is in allusion to the evil tendency of these examples that the iniquity of the father is declared to be visited upon the son. And it appears to be the principal design of this admonition to warn parents of their duty to their offspring, and to all others within the sphere of their influence. It directs the Christian to let his light shine before men, so that others may learn to glorify God, and experience the riches of that mercy which he displays "unto thousands of them that love him and keep his commandments."

II. *Obedience essential to salvation.* "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." If this be true, how vain must be the hope of happiness in the world to come, apart from the love and the practice of holiness, in this state of preparation! What is sin? Sin is the transgression of the law. And where is the Scriptural ground for the belief, that the requirements of the law can be set at naught with impunity, and that the sinner can lift up his arm in rebellion against his Maker, aware of all the fearful consequences of his disaffection, and yet escape the divine displeasure? So far from there being any sanction of such a sentiment in the volume of inspiration, even the heathens, who it may be presumed are ignorant of the precise penalty of disobedience, are declared by Paul in his epistle to the Romans to be

Q. Where is this passage recorded? When do children suffer in consequence of the guilt of their parents? What appears to be the principal design of this admonition? What is essential to salvation? What is said of the soul that sinneth? What is sin? Is the sinner without excuse? What is said of the heathens? What law have they?

without excuse, because they failed to discover in the works of the Creator, the evidences of his eternal power and godhead; and because, instead of worshipping the Being thus revealed to them as God, they worshipped the works of their own hands and refused to obey the law of conscience inscribed upon their hearts.

III. *The nature of the penalty.* They who violate the divine law wilfully and without compunction, will suffer the very punishment pronounced against them by the lawgiver; a punishment, not suited to the vain hopes and groundless expectations of man, but adapted to the great and awful purpose of vindicating the divine requirements. What then, the important inquiry now arises, is the nature of this punishment? In various parts of the sacred word it is denominated "*death*;" (Gen. ii. 17.) it is also described as a worm that dieth not, and as a fire that is not quenched. These, and many other passages teach us, that it will consist in the future separation of the soul from all the happiness of heaven. The reasonableness, and may I not add, the *mercy* of such an arrangement will be manifest, if we institute an inquiry into the actual scenes of future blessedness, and into the peculiar feelings of those who have passed into the eternal world; and whose garments have been dipped in the blood of the Lamb. Heaven is the abode of saints and angels, of the prophets and apostles, and of all the devoted servants of God. The joys of heaven are unmingled with pain or apprehension.

Q. Of what do the works of the Creator afford evidence? What is the penalty of sin? In what will the punishment of sin in the future world consist? What may be said of the future separation of the wicked from the happiness of heaven? A. It is both rational and merciful. Who dwell in heaven?

There are no evil passions at work there, to interrupt the harmony, or destroy the happiness that prevails among those who worship around the throne of God. There the wicked cease from troubling. But how are these great and interesting results to be secured? Surely not by admitting into that community all the despisers of the divine law. Is it to be supposed that the blasphemer, who leaves this world destitute of every feeling of respect for the character and requirements of the Almighty, will be prepared to chant his praise and to magnify his name in eternity! Is it to be supposed that the man, who has always lived in the open violation of every principle of holiness, and who dies with all his enmity against God still rankling and unconquered in his bosom, will be ready to unite in songs of adoration to "Him who sitteth on the throne!" Consider the influence of sin in this life. The sinner does not delight to associate with the good and the pious on earth; nor can he find pleasure in the society of heaven, where holiness is inscribed on every heart.

IV. The death of the finally impenitent will be *everlasting*.

a. This truth is established by the fact of there being no other state of probation than the present existence. Were there such a state in a future world, a truth so interesting to man would not have been concealed. But we look in vain throughout the Scriptures for such an

Q. With what are the joys of heaven unmingled? Would this be the case if the impenitent were admitted there? The sinner does not delight in the society of the good and pious on earth — what are we to infer from this?

A. That he cannot delight in the society of heaven. How long will the punishment of the finally impenitent continue? On what (*a*) is this truth established? For what do we look in vain throughout the Scriptures?

announcement. Indeed the whole tenor of the word of God leads conclusively to the opposite sentiment; (Luke, xvi. 19–31.) and therefore, the supposition that there is another state of preparation for eternity beyond this life, amounts to the direct charge of deception against all the sacred writers.

b. Again: the *everlasting* separation of the finally impenitent from the joys of heaven, may be argued from all the appeals of the gospel. The proofs in favor of this opinion are not only negative, but positive. There is not only an utter absence of every sanction of the contrary sentiment, but the gospel is full of the most solemn assurances that the soul must escape in this life from the penalty of sin, or be lost to the happiness of the redeemed forever. Such proofs are afforded in all the tender and warm entreaties of the Son of God; as well as of the prophets and apostles. "Work while it is day, lest the night cometh in which no man can work. What I say unto you I say unto all, watch. Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation. The Son of man cometh in such an hour as ye think not. Strive (as if in agony) to enter in at the straight gate; for many I say unto you will seek to enter in and shall not be able." This language of exhortation is addressed to the soul, to warn it of the danger of sinning against God. And the earnestness and solicitude which characterize all the appeals of the Bible, show that this danger is not to be

Q. What does the whole tenor of the word of God teach us in regard to the future punishment of the wicked? (Luke xvi. 19–31.) To what does the supposition that there is another state of preparation for eternity beyond this life, amount? On what other ground is this doctrine based? What are the assurances of the gospel in regard to the soul's escape from the penalty of sin? Repeat one or two passages to prove this. For what purpose is this language addressed to the soul?

trifled with, or regarded with indifference. Nay, they prove that "*now* is the accepted time and the day of salvation," and that if our present opportunities of reconciliation with God are neglected, it must be at the risk of everlasting ruin.

c. Nor can the groundless hypothesis be sustained by any sophistry of argument, that *the future state of the wicked is emendatory*, and that they will be prepared to associate with angels and the spirits of the blest, by a *limited duration of penal suffering*. Such a conception could never have been originated in the mind by a candid, prayerful, and unprejudiced examination of the truth as it is revealed in Jesus. For in the first place, the whole Bible is opposed to such a belief. And in the second place, it renders the atonement made by the Son of God for the guilt of man, altogether unnecessary, and hence, would lead us to question the wisdom of the Almighty. If any duration of suffering, on the part of the sinner, short of the *everlasting* ruin of the soul, could atone for the violation of the law, it may well be asked, why did the lawgiver suffer the weight of his wrath to fall upon the Prince of Peace? Why was he called upon to leave his throne, and to veil the bright displays of his majesty and glory in human flesh, and why was he "numbered with the transgressors," if all this condescension and these agonies were but a needless exhibition? Now either the sufferings of Christ *were* necessary to rescue the soul from everlasting death, or they were *not*. If they *were*

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- Q. What do the earnestness and solicitude of these appeals prove to us? What hypothesis cannot be sustained? What is opposed to such a belief?
- A. The whole Bible. If this belief were true, how would it be with the atonement made by Christ?

necessary, then the soul cannot escape the penalty of sin, but through the atoning merits of the Lamb. They who contend that the soul can atone for its own guilt by a limited duration of suffering, will say: "Every man shall be punished according to his works." This proposition is true, but the difference here spoken of is a difference in *degree*, not in *duration*. The sufferings of all will not be equally *in'ense*, but this is not to say that they will not be equally *lasting*. So there will be different degrees of happiness in heaven, but the happiness of all will be *eternal*.

d. That the penalty pronounced against those, who are guilty of the violation of the moral law of God, is everlasting death, may be proved from *the positive testimony of revelation*. In describing the judgment scene, and the separation of the wicked from the good on that day of deep and all-pervading interest, Christ says: "These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." (Matth. xxv. 46.) There is perhaps no passage of sacred writ that sustains this position more conclusively. According to every law of just interpretation, the punishment here spoken of is everlasting; as enduring as eternity itself. The philological proof in this passage is overwhelming; for in the original Greek the very word, used to denote the extent of the duration of the happiness of heaven, is also employed to designate the extent of the duration of the

Q. If the sufferings of Christ were necessary to the salvation of the soul, what follows? What argument do they employ, who contend that the soul can atone for its own guilt by a limited duration of suffering? Is the difference spoken of in this passage a difference in *degree* or *duration*? How long will these different *degrees* of punishment last? In what is the happiness of one saint distinguished from that of another, in *degree* or *duration*? What other proof have you of the everlasting duration of future punishment?

misery of hell. If then it be contended, in view of this very decisive testimony, that the penalty of transgression is not eternal death, it may with equal propriety be asserted that the reward of the righteous is not eternal life. But if it be admitted that the reward of the righteous is endless, it follows incontestably that the punishment of the wicked is equally so. And besides, the word of God is full of testimony the most positive and conclusive, that the penalty of disobedience threatens to involve the soul in everlasting ruin. (Luke, xvi. ; 2 Thess. i. 7-9; Rev. xx. 10.)

V. *Justification by works, impossible.*

Nor can the sinner obtain salvation as the *reward* of all the efforts of obedience of which he is capable. Indeed, "there is none that doeth good, no not one," and the best services of man carry along with them the evidences of his moral imperfection. The powers of the soul have become so weakened by sin, and man inherits a nature so depraved, as to render a perfect obedience to the moral law of God utterly impossible. This depravity is both natural and total. It is natural; that is, all men bring it with them into life. It is total; that is, as long as the sinner is under its influence, he "cannot please God." Even when the judgment approves of the commands of the Almighty, the moral energy necessary to their execution is not to be found. (Rom. vii. 22, 23.) And besides, were the sinner only guilty of a single act of transgression, during the whole period

Q. What passage sustains this position most conclusively? (Matth. xxv. 46.) If it be contended, in view of this passage, that the punishment of the wicked is not everlasting death, what may be asserted with equal propriety, in regard to the reward of the righteous? Can the sinner obtain salvation as the reward of his works, or not?

of his existence here on earth, that act would constitute a violation of the law, sufficiently aggravated, to bring down its penalty upon the transgressor. (James, ii. 10.) And the fact that we sin against God every day of our lives, must effectually exclude every hope of justification, on the ground of personal merit. To regard our own works therefore, as possessing any value, is dangerous in the extreme. And they who establish their expectations of happiness on this basis, will be found wanting on the great day of account. This position has been strikingly illustrated by Toplady in the following relation. "Sir James Thomkill was the person who painted the inside of the cupola of St. Paul's, London. After having finished one of the compartments, he stepped back gradually to see how it would look at a distance. He receded so far (still keeping his eye intently fixed on the painting,) that he was gone almost to the very edge of the scaffold without perceiving it. Had he continued to retreat, half a minute more would have completed his destruction, and he must have fallen to the pavement underneath. A person present, who saw the danger the great artist was in, had the happy presence of mind suddenly to snatch up one of the brushes and spoil the painting by rubbing it over. Sir James, transported with rage, sprung forward to save the remainder of the piece. But his rage soon turned into thanks, when the person told him, 'Sir, by spoiling the painting, I have saved the life of the painter. You

Q. How many acts of transgression are necessary to incur the penalty of sin? Where have we proof of this? (James ii. 10.) But we sin against God every day of our lives — what then is excluded? On the great day of account, what will be the case of those who establish their hopes of justification on the ground of personal merit?

were advanced to the extremity of the scaffold, without knowing it. Had I called out to you to apprise you of your danger, you would naturally have turned to look behind you; and the surprise of finding yourself in such a dreadful situation would have made you fall indeed. I had therefore no other method of retrieving you but by acting as I did.' Similar, if I may so speak, is the method of God's dealing with his people. We are all naturally fond of our own performances. We admire them to our own ruin, unless the Holy Spirit retrieve us from our folly. This he does by showing us the insufficiency of our works to justify us before God, and that 'by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified.' " How admirably adapted to the case of every sinner, is that eloquent petition from the pen of the same writer :

"Rock of ages cleft for me,
 Let me hide myself in thee;
 Let the water and the blood,
 From thy side a healing flood,
 Be of sin the double cure :
 Save from wrath, and make me pure."

How animating the thought, that the transgressor is not left to exclaim in hopeless despair : "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."

VI. *Faith and good works the conditions of salvation.*

It has been already asserted that obedience to the moral law is essential to justification, and again, that "by the deeds of the law no flesh living can be justified." This may appear incongruous. But the whole

Q. What are the conditions of salvation ?

mystery is explained, when we bear in mind that, according to the gospel system, good works are required of us, not as the ground of justification, but simply as the evidence of faith, and the fruits of regeneration. "He that *believeth* shall be saved." The *faith* of the Christian consists, in the persuasion that the penalty of sin was paid, when the Lamb was slain upon the cross; this is the basis of his every hope of reconciliation with God, and his confidence of salvation is fixed solely upon the atoning merits of Christ. But this faith is necessarily *practical* in its nature; "without works it is dead and vain." (James ii. 26.) A saving faith—

"Extinguishes the thirst of sin,
And lights the sacred fire
Of love to God and heavenly things."

The following incident is here subjoined, that the inseparable connection between faith and obedience, as the conditions of salvation, may be rendered plain to every mind. "A worthy son of the church in the West Highlands, who had peculiar opinions touching the 'full assurance of faith,' having occasion to cross a ferry, availed himself of the opportunity to interrogate the boatman as to the grounds of his belief, assuring him that if he had faith he was blessed immortally. The man of the oar said he had always entertained a different notion of the subject, and begged to give an illustration of his opinion. 'Let us suppose,' said the ferryman, 'that one of these oars is called Faith, and the other Works, and try their several merits.' Accordingly, throw-

Q. What is the true and only ground of the Christian's hope? A. Faith in the atoning merits of Christ. Why are good works required? What is the nature of faith without works?

ing down one oar in the boat, he proceeded to pull the other with all his strength, upon which the boat was turned round and made no way. 'Now,' said he, 'you perceive Faith wont do; let us try what Works can! Seizing the other oar, and giving it the same trial, the same consequences ensued. 'Works,' said he, 'you see wont do either; but let us try them together.' The result was successful; the boat shot through the waves, and soon reached the wished for haven. 'This,' said the honest ferryman, 'is the way by which I hope to be wafted over the troubled waters of this world to the peaceful shores of immortality.' "

The believer in obedience to the command of the Saviour himself, (John, xiv. 15,) and in accordance with the dictates of gratitude, (1 John, iv. 19,) pledges his services to Christ; and whilst he builds the fondest anticipations of happiness on the assurances of divine love, and on the conviction of the all-sufficiency of the provisions of divine grace, he continually cultivates those holy desires, and those pure and lofty affections, which are indispensably essential to his preparedness for the joys of heaven. (Heb. xii. 14.) For obedience to the moral law is as necessary to human salvation now, as it ever has been. The transgression of the law is still sin, and the punishment of sin is death; and though *without faith* we must inevitably fail to appropriate to ourselves the offered blessings of the gospel; *without obedience*, all our hopes of justification are baseless, and must perish forever.

" Vain are our fancies, airy flights,
 If faith be cold and dead;
 None but a living power unites
 To Christ, the living Head;

A faith that changes all the heart;
 A faith that works by love;
 That bids all sinful joys depart,
 And lifts the thoughts above.
 Faith *must obey our Father's will,*
 As well as trust his grace:
 A pard'ning God requires us still
 To *perfect holiness.*"

PRAYER.

At Sinai the children of Israel said unto Moses; "speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die!" This is not my prayer, O Lord. No. In humility, and with a strong desire to know thy will, I would beseech thee with Samuel, thy prophet: "speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." I would not learn from Moses and the Prophets alone, but I would learn from thee, my Lord and my God, by whose spirit all the prophets were enlightened! Thou canst lead me to thyself without their aid; but their testimony must be vain and ineffectual, unless thou enlighten the mind and sanctify the heart. Their words may fall upon the ear; but the *spirit* is not their gift. Their speech is lovely; but when thou art silent it cannot influence the heart. They utter language; thou clothest it with power. They proclaim *mysteries*; but thou openest the seal of the understanding. They make known thy law; thou impartest the strength necessary to its fulfillment. They point out the way; thou guidest the feet that walk therein. Their work is external; thou givest light to comprehend and a disposition to obey. They plant and water, but the increase comes from thee.

O Lord, God, thou fountain of everlasting truth! Teach me to obey thy will that I may not be found fruitless at last, or be numbered with those who hear thy word, without feeling the inspiration of the Spirit! Speak Lord, thy servant heareth! For thou hast the words of eternal life. Speak consolation and joy to my soul; speak, that my whole life may be sanctified; yes, speak, to the glory and the everlasting praise of thy name. Amen.

PART SECOND.

THE CREED;

OR, ARTICLES OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH.

These articles contain a summary of the doctrines embraced in the gospel. They present to our view, in a condensed analysis, the fundamental principles of our blessed religion; and, as a *creed*, they are certainly free from those objectionable features which distinguish many of the systems that have obtained in the church, and given rise to numberless sectarian divisions and jealousies. For it is a humiliating truth, that Christians have for ages, lost sight of the weighty interests which they are obligated unitedly to promote; and have violated that principle of love which should ever be the bond of their union and the basis of their intercourse, in their zeal for opinions of but little comparative importance; and, as theories of belief, altogether unessential to salvation. These articles have been generally denominated "The Apostolic Creed," but whether they have any claim to the origin, which this title seems to designate, cannot now be determined with any degree of certainty. It may be, that this name was given it, not to convey the

Q. Of what does the second part of the Catechism treat? What do these articles contain? What have these articles been generally denominated? Have they any claim to the origin which this title seems to designate? Or, in other words, is it certain that they were arranged by the apostles, or by their order? Why may this name have been given it?

impression of its having been drawn up by the apostles themselves, or even by their order, but simply because it was designed by its framers to exhibit a brief statement of the fundamental doctrines of the gospel. In all probability it owes its origin to an age posterior to that of the apostles, and in this case was doubtless composed to counteract the influence of those heretical sentiments, which, even in the first and second centuries began to spread, and to exercise their baneful tendency. It is certain however, that it was adopted at a very early period by the church at Rome; and it is admitted by the most learned writers of ecclesiastical history, (even those who deny its being the work of the apostles,) that the doctrines which it embraces, were the only doctrines proclaimed by the first teachers of Christianity.

“The Creed” has been variously divided and subdivided by different writers. We will consider it now, in reference to its three grand divisions, or articles; the first of which treats of *Creation*, the second of *Redemption*, and the third of *Sanctification*.

ARTICLE FIRST.

“Of the Creation.” It reads thus:

“I believe in God the Father, Almighty maker of heaven and earth.” (1 Cor. viii. 6.)

This article is explained by Luther as follows:

“I believe that God hath created me and all that exists; that he hath given and still preserves to me my body and soul, with all their members and faculties, and

Q. When was this creed adopted by the church of Rome? What is admitted by the most learned writers of church history? Of what does the first article treat? Rehearse it. What do you profess to believe in this article?

all that I possess; that he richly and daily provides me with all the necessaries and enjoyments of life; that he guards me from danger and preserves me from evil; wholly induced by divine, paternal love and mercy, without any claim of merit or worthiness in me, for all which I am in duty bound to thank, praise, serve, and obey him. This is most certainly true."

This article presents the Supreme Being to our view in the threefold relation of our 1. *Creator*, 2. *Preserver*, and 3. *Benefactor*.

I. a. The phrase "*maker of heaven and earth*" if rightly understood, will afford to our minds the most sublime conceptions of the power, majesty, and wisdom of the Creator. The individual who confines his meditations to the scenery and objects of this world, takes but a very limited view of the wonderful works of God. "The whole heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handy-work." The sun itself is a bulk of matter, one million three hundred thousand times larger than the earth. And besides there are many planets belonging to our solar system, some of which are several hundred times larger than the globe which we inhabit. Again: every star that twinkles in the firmament is a sun, perhaps more glorious than ours, imparting light and heat to distant worlds. Scarcely less than a thousand of these suns are visible to the naked eye, and by the aid of a telescope millions may be discovered. When therefore we wish to form a faint conception of the creating power of the Highest, we must not

Q. How does this article present the Supreme Being to our view? What has God created? Of what does this world afford a very limited view? A. Of the wonderful works of God. How large is the sun? How many of these suns may be discovered in the firmament with the naked eye?

confine our attention to the beautiful and sublime scenery of this world; to the mountains, and hills, and rivers that surround us; these are but a point, in comparison with the grand displays of omnipotent energy, exhibited throughout the universe.

b. The account of the creation of the world on which we dwell, as recorded by the sacred historian, is very brief. Whether it was formed out of nothing, just before the creation of our first parents, or whether it had been previously the abode of other intelligences, and existed in a chaotic state for an indefinite period of time, is a subject which has given rise to much discussion. There are many circumstances which favor the latter opinion, nor is there any thing in the sacred word to oppose it.* Moses relates, that "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Gen. i. 1.) Supposing it to have been the dwelling place of other intelligences prior to the formation of man, the next verse would then refer to that confusion of its materials which subsisted during the mysterious interval: "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." (Gen. i. 2.) After every thing

* It is a favorite theory, I believe, of an eminent minister of our church in this country, that the earth, previous to the creation of man, was the happy abode of "the devil and his angels," and that they were banished from it in consequence of their apostacy. The hypothesis is bold, though interesting; and if true, would serve to explain the cause of that bitter malice and deep rooted enmity, which induced the tempter to lure our first parents into the way of transgression.

Q. Is it absolutely certain at what time this world was created? Is there any thing in the history of the creation, related by Moses, to oppose the opinion that it existed previous to the period when our first parents were formed? How was the earth before it was arranged in its present form?

was arranged in its present order and beauty; after the darkness which rested upon the face of the deep had been penetrated by the light, and the waters under the firmament were "gathered together unto one place," and when the power of vegetation had been imparted to the dry land, God created the fowls of the air, and the fishes of the sea, and the beasts of the field, and every creeping thing, to enjoy the bounties of his providence; and at last he made *man* in his own image, endowed him with *an immortal soul*, and appointed him to have dominion over all the lower orders of sensitive beings. (Genesis, i.)

c. Superior orders of intelligences owe their existence to the all-creating hand of the Almighty. We read in the sacred word, of angels and archangels, and of cherubim and seraphim; all of whom have kept their first estate, and who are continually employed to execute the sovereign will of the Creator. (Matth. xxvi. 53; Psalm civ. 4.)

2. The *preserving care* of God is continually exercised over all his works. Every breath we draw is therefore an evidence that we are the objects of an ever watchful providence. And this superintending care of the Almighty extends to the most unimportant incident of life, and to the minutest object of Creation. Not a hair can fall from our heads, nor can a worm be crushed beneath our feet, without attracting the notice of the great parent of the universe. (Matth. x. 30.) It is im-

Q. What did God create after the power of vegetation had been imparted to the dry land? What did he create last of all? How was man distinguished? To whom do angels and archangels, cherubim and seraphim, owe their existence? How are they employed? What does God exercise over all his works? Of what is every breath we draw an evidence? To what does this care of the Almighty extend?

possible for us to determine, in how many instances we have been shielded from unseen danger by the divine protection; but certain it is, that we are exposed every moment to a thousand accidents, which are averted from us by the care of our Heavenly Father. These observations will apply to *all* created things, whether animate or inanimate. Hence, the planets and the sun, and all the unnumbered worlds that float in the regions of boundless space, together with their inhabitants; inasmuch as their existence is not necessary and independent, are incessantly sustained in being by the mighty power of Him "who spake and it was done."

3. *a.* The *benefactions* of the Almighty extend to every individual of the human race, and they are scattered with a profusion that evinces his boundless and unceasing love. "He richly and daily provides us with all the necessaries and enjoyments of life." The revolution of the seasons, and the succession of day and night; the fruitfulness of the earth, which repays with an abundant harvest the labors of the husbandman; and the institution of all the social relations; are so many sources of happiness to man.

b. Towards all the *inferior* tribes of animals the divine beneficence is also richly and unceasingly manifested. The beasts of the field; the fowls of the air; and the fishes of the sea; all "these wait upon him, and he giveth them their meat in due season." (Ps. civ. 27.)

c. And thus the Creator, as the parent of the universe,

Q. Who averts from us the many dangers, seen and unseen, to which we are continually exposed? Is the existence of any created thing necessary and independent? By what are things animate and inanimate sustained in existence? To whom do the benefactions of the Almighty extend? With what does he provide us? What does God manifest to all the *inferior* animals, the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, etc.?

also supplies to all orders of *superior* beings, sources of enjoyment adapted to their refined and exalted capacities.

d. In regard to *man*, it may be strictly said, that he has forfeited every claim to the bounties of providence; and that he is wholly indebted to the long-suffering, the forbearance, and the love of God, for that watchful care which he experiences every day, and for all the means of enjoyment that are placed within his reach. Were the Creator to regulate his conduct in this respect according to human merit, every one of our guilty race would be deprived of every source of joy; for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," (Rom. iii. 23.) But the favors of providence are dispensed, without any reference to the moral characteristics of those who receive them; "he sends his rain on the just and on the unjust," (Matt. v. 45) and imparts the gifts of his bounty even to the most impious and rebellious among the children of men.

4. *a.* In virtue of this threefold relation, as creator, preserver and benefactor, which God sustains to all created intelligences, he sways the sceptre of universal authority; and as the moral Governor of the universe, possesses the undoubted right of instituting *laws* to regulate the conduct of all the subjects of his government, whether in heaven or on earth. From these considerations it plainly follows that the ten commandments, or the moral law of God revealed to man, should be the standard

Q. What does he supply to all *superior* beings? What has man forfeited *d*? To what is he indebted for the enjoyment which he experiences? Were the divine conduct regulated according to human merit, what would follow? How are the favors of Providence dispensed? Quote a passage to prove this. In virtue of his threefold relation as creator, preserver and benefactor, what right does God possess? How then should we regard the ten commandments, or moral law?

of all our actions, and that all our inclinations should be brought under its supreme control. For this law has been proclaimed to us by *Him*, who has every right to command; and whom we are bound to obey.

b. Again: when we contemplate the arrangements of divine providence, and observe how well they are adapted to the promotion of our *sensitive* enjoyment, we must believe, independent of all other evidence, *that the regulations of the moral government of the Almighty*, (or in other words his moral requirements,) are equally suited to the great purpose of advancing our *spiritual* and *eternal* interests. Such is, indeed the case. The spirit of perfect obedience that prevails among the heavenly host, is at once the source of their everlasting enjoyment and the pledge of their harmonious intercourse. The bond of their union to God and to each other, is LOVE; that very principle on which the moral law is based. And hence we must possess the *disposition to obey* this law of love, before we can be qualified for the society of the blest. Indeed, the universal observance of the moral law among mankind, would perhaps leave nothing of heaven to be desired on earth.

c. *Gratitude* should also incite us to obey the moral requirements of the Creator. His benevolence is constantly displayed to every one of our sinful race. The dispensations of his providence and the provisions of his gospel are alike the evidences of his affection; and whilst

Q. By whom has this law been proclaimed to us? To what great purpose are the moral requirements of God adapted? What is the source of everlasting enjoyment to the heavenly host? What is the bond of their union to God and each other? On what is the moral law based? What must we possess before we are qualified for heaven? What would be the probable result, were all men strictly to obey the moral law? To what should gratitude incite us? What kind of obedience should we yield?

we are persuaded of the excellence of his laws and of his authority to impose them, it should be our delight to render a *filial* and joyful obedience.

ARTICLE SECOND.

The second article treats of our redemption. It is as follows:

“I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.” (Eph. i. 7: 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.)

It is thus explained: “I believe, that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man born of the virgin Mary, is my Lord; who hath redeemed, purchased, and delivered me, a poor, forlorn, condemned person, from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with his holy precious blood and with his innocent sufferings and death; in order that I might be his, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and happiness; even as he is risen from the dead, and now lives and reigns to all eternity. This is most certainly true.” (John, i. 1–18; Matth. i. 21; John, iii. 16; Rom. ix. 5.)

In this article our attention is directed to “the Lamb of God, who was slain for the sins of the world.” It

Q. Of what does the second article treat? Rehearse it. What do you profess to believe in this article? In this article to what is our attention directed?

presents for our consideration, the *twofold nature* of Christ; together with his offices as our *Redeemer*, our *Mediator*, and our *Judge*.

I. *The divinity of the Son of God.* This doctrine is established on the following grounds.

a. The *work of Creation* is ascribed to the Messiah. "In the beginning (that is before any object was created) was the word, and the word was with God, and the word *was* God. *All things were made by him.*" (John, i. 1-3.) There can be no difficulty in applying the epithet *logos*, or the word, to Christ; for in the 14th verse of the same chapter it is recorded: "*And the word was made flesh* and dwelt among us." To harmonize this representation with the declaration of Moses: "In the beginning *God* created the heavens and the earth," we must admit the divine nature of the Messiah. (Col. i. 16.)

b. He is not only the creator but also the *preserver* of the universe. "He upholdeth all things by the word of his power." (Heb. i. 3.)

c. *Divine perfections are ascribed to Christ.* "In him dwelleth all *the fullness of the Godhead* bodily." (Col. ii. 9.) "He is able *even to subdue all things unto himself.*" (Phil. iii. 21.)

d. He is expressly called *God*. (John, i. 1.)

Q. What does it present for our consideration? In proof of the divinity of Christ, what work is ascribed to him? What do you understand by the divinity of Christ? A. That he is *truly God*. Where is the work of creation ascribed to him? How do you know that *logos*, or the word, refers, in this passage, to Christ? We are told that all things were made by *Christ*—how do you reconcile this with the declaration of Moses, that *God* created the heavens and the earth? What do we learn from Hebrews i. 3? Where are divine perfections ascribed to Christ? What is he expressly called in John i. 1.?

e. Christ is to be *an object of worship* to all his followers on earth, and to all the inhabitants of heaven. "God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." (Phil. ii. 9, 10.) No testimony in favor of the Messiah's divinity, can be more conclusive than this. Idolatry, or the worship of any other being or object than the Creator, is expressly forbidden in the moral law, and the severest chastisements were inflicted upon the Israelites for the commission of this sin. And it is evident that Paul, as an inspired writer, could not subvert that law which Christ came to ratify, or set at naught one of its most sacred precepts. When therefore he represents the Messiah as exalted at the right hand of God, and as receiving the worship of the whole intelligent universe, he ascribes to him the very perfections of the divine character. In perfect harmony with this, is the sublime description of St. John, who saw, in prophetic vision, the innumerable host of the redeemed, together with "ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands" of angels encircling the throne of God; saying, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." And he heard every creature say "blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth

Q. What do we learn from Phil. ii. 9, 10? What is forbidden in the first commandment? A. Idolatry, or the worship of any other being than God. Were Christ not God, why would it be wrong to worship him? When Paul represents the Messiah as exalted at the right hand of God, and as receiving the worship of the whole intelligent universe, what does he ascribe to him?

upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." (Rev. v. 11-13.)

f. The testimony of the Saviour himself on this point is no less decisive. In the charge given to his disciples, he says: "Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." (Matth. xxviii. 19.) He also alludes to his approaching death and resurrection as determined by his own will. "I lay my life down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." (John, x. 18.) The language addressed to Philip is peculiarly emphatic. This Apostle longed to behold *the Father*. In reply to his request: "Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us," Jesus says: "Have *I* been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not *known me*, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John, xiv. 8, 9.) "*I and my Father are one.*" (John, x. 30.)

II. *The human nature of Christ.*

The man Jesus, in whom the divinity was manifested, was "conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the virgin Mary." Therefore the Messiah was true man, as well as true God, and possessed a human soul as well as a divine nature. This distinct (human) nature of Christ, was essential,

a. *To the fulfilment of prophecy.* The Messiah, according to the declaration of the ancient prophets, was to belong to the family of David. (Isa. xi. 1; Jer. xxiii. 5.)

Q. What is said in Rev. v. 11-13? What can you say of the Saviour's testimony in regard to his own character? In whose name were the disciples commanded to baptize? What does Christ say in reference to his own death and resurrection? What did he say to Philip? What other nature did Christ possess? Was he true man as well as true God? To what was the human nature of Christ essential a?

The genealogy of Christ has been clearly traced through Mary's ancestors, by St. Luke, to this source. In this genealogical record, the inspired historian speaks of Joseph as the *supposed* father of Jesus, leaving his readers to infer that such was not in reality the case; and then mentions Heli, who was in fact the father of *Mary*, and became the father of Joseph only in consequence of his marriage and follows the lineage of Christ through this branch of the family, beyond David and Abraham, to Adam, to whom the promise was first given; "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." (Luke iii. 23—34.)

b. The human nature of Christ was also necessary to three very important objects of his advent, namely, his *instructions*, his *example*, and his *death*.

It is true, all the precepts and doctrines contained in the gospel, might have been communicated in the manner adopted under the old dispensation, and confirmed by those awful manifestations of their divine authority, which at Sinai filled all the Israelites, and even Moses himself, with "exceeding great fear." But the gospel is a covenant of grace, and the manner of its communication was perfectly consistent with its merciful character. And the Messiah came, not with legions of angels to enforce his commands, but in the form of a helpless infant. He was ushered into the world under the most ordinary circumstances; he was born in a stable for want of accommodations at the inn; and was cradled in a manger.

Q. To what family was he to belong, according to prophecy? To what family did Mary, the mother of Jesus, belong? Whose father was Heli? To what important objects of his mission was the human nature of Christ necessary? In what manner might the instructions of the gospel have been communicated, had not the Saviour appeared on earth? With what was the manner of communicating the truths of the gospel perfectly consistent?

And when he entered upon the discharge of the great duties of his office as a *teacher*, twelve apostles were chosen; who enjoyed for a season the benefit of those lessons of wisdom and truth which flowed from the Saviour's lips, and were then sent forth to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation to their perishing fellow-men.

But the human nature of Christ was particularly adapted and absolutely essential to that method of *practical* instruction which he ever pursued. His religion required of its adherents in the early ages of the church, not only the sacrifice of emolument and honor, but of life itself. But in this, the Redeemer demanded no more of his followers than he had come to perform even for his foes. And when the apostles witnessed the persecutions of their divine master; when they saw him led forth from judgment to death, they were prepared to enter upon a like scene of trial, and to stand firmly upon the ground of their faith, though the powers of earth and the interests of hell were arrayed against them.

But the *system of atonement* required that the *man Jesus* should suffer. The violated law demanded the death of a victim; and therefore the assumption of human nature on the part of Christ, was indispensably essential to the accomplishment of his gracious purpose in regard to mankind.

The fact that the Messiah possessed a human soul as well as a divine nature, also serves to *explain* many circum-

Q. What was essential to that method of *practical* instruction which the Saviour pursued? What did the religion of Christ require of its adherents in the early ages of the church? What does it require at all times?

A. A spirit of self-denial. When the apostles witnessed the persecutions of their divine master, for what were they prepared? What did the system of atonement require?

stances of his history which would otherwise be enveloped in impenetrable mystery, and involve many apparent contradictions. For how, it might be asked, could the Saviour, at one time, speak of himself as only obedient to the will of another; (Matt. xxvi. 39,) and again represent his own acts, not only as resulting from his individual choice, but as the effects of his own power. (John x. 18.) But the mystery is cleared up if we consider him as speaking in the former case in reference to his *human*, and in the latter, in reference to his *divine* nature. *As man*, he was obedient to his Father's will, "even unto death;" but *as God*, that will was his own. Hence, these passages serve to point out the marked and positive distinction between the humanity and the divinity of the Son of God. What mind has not been filled with astonishment, in contemplating the scene of Gethsemane, and the agonies of the cross? How often has the question arisen, to agitate the doubts of the believer, "How can these things be?" But every circumstance connected with these mysterious transactions, (*mysterious* especially, in as far as the *love* which prompted them was unparalleled and inconceivable,) is satisfactorily explained, if we bear in mind that the *human soul* of Christ was impassioned, at the thought of the weight of anguish so soon to be endured; and that the *man Jesus* was left to exclaim upon the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me."

The *union* of these two natures, in one person, can-

Q. What does the fact that the Messiah possessed a human soul as well as a divine nature, serve to explain? At one time the Saviour speaks of himself as obedient to the will of another, and again as independent of all will but his own—how do you reconcile this apparent contradiction? Hence, what do these passages serve to point out?

not indeed be explained; but though incomprehensible to the human understanding, it is perfectly consistent with reason, analogy, and experience. For we are persuaded of the existence of the human soul, and of its union with the body. This is a truth based upon our own convictions, and yet it is as inexplicable, on any principle with which we are familiar, as the doctrine of "God manifest in the flesh."

III. *The Atonement.*

a. Was rendered necessary to human redemption by the introduction of sin into the world. The penalty of sin is death; and this penalty our first parents incurred when they ate of the forbidden tree. And not only so: they likewise became *spiritually diseased*, and this disease has affected the souls of all their posterity; so that the sons and daughters of Adam, have neither the disposition, nor the power, to render a saving, that is a perfect obedience to the moral law of God. The consequence of this total and universal prostration of the moral powers of man, is the universal exposure of all men to the punishment of transgression. (Rom. v. 12.)

b. *The object* of the atonement is to effect a reconciliation between God and man. The divine justice required the penalty of the violated law to be paid, and the insulted majesty of heaven to be vindicated; and the sinner would have been deprived of every hope of reconci-

Q. With what is the *union* of the two natures of Christ perfectly consistent? Of what are we persuaded in regard to the human soul? What has rendered the atonement necessary? What is the penalty of sin? By what act did our first parents incur this penalty? Who have been affected by the spiritual disease consequent upon this act? Hence in what condition are all the sons and daughters of Adam? What is the consequence of this total prostration of the moral powers of man? What is the object of the atonement? What did the divine justice require?

liation, had not the Lamb of God stood between man and his Maker, to shield the soul from impending wrath. (Job, ix. 33.) The death of Christ is therefore to be regarded as a full satisfaction to the claims of divine Justice, and as opening the way to everlasting enjoyment for all who wish to pursue it. "Mercy and truth are met together;" and God may now be just, and yet the justifier of those who believe in Jesus. (Rom. iii. 26.)

c. *The nature of the atonement.* The sufferings of Christ were *vicarious*; and as the substitute of the sinner, he endured a punishment fully adequate to the great object to be secured, namely, the redemption of all men from the penalty incurred in the violation of the moral law. "He was bruised for our iniquities; he was wounded for our transgressions; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." The very fact, that the sinner could not atone, by any *limited* duration of suffering, for his own guilt, proves that the demands of the law were to be fully answered, either *by the endless suffering of the transgressor himself*; or else *by the substitution of another*; upon whom the heavy weight of the chastisement, due to men, might fall. 'In the very nature of the case, the punishment endured by the Lamb of God, *could not have been the same in duration or in kind* as that denounced against the transgressor of the law, but there can be as little doubt, that it was fully adequate to the great and awful purpose of

Q. In what case would the sinner have been deprived of all hope of reconciliation? How is the death of Christ therefore to be regarded? What was the nature of Christ's sufferings? In virtue of these sufferings, what relation did he sustain to the sinner? As the sinner's substitute what did he endure? What is proved by the fact, that the sinner could not atone for his own guilt by any limited duration of suffering? To what was the death of Christ fully adequate?

atonement for the sins of the world. Indeed, were it not so, it would be extremely difficult; nay, it would be impossible to account for certain striking incidents in the Saviour's life. Why did he feel that agony in the garden which extorted from him the wish that the bitter cup he was about to drink might pass away? Why did he cry out, as one forsaken, on the cross? Why? unless the agonies he felt were peculiar and intense; resulting from the *vicarious* nature of his office. To suppose otherwise would derogate from the glory of the Saviour's character; for if we consider the sufferings of the Son of God as a mere *example* of devotedness to the will of his Heavenly Father, we must admit, that that example has been far surpassed, by those martyrs to the cause of truth, who have died at the stake without a groan.

d. The atonement universal. On this subject various opinions have been entertained in the church; one of the most prominent of which is, that the benefits of the atonement are necessarily *limited* to certain individuals of mankind, who have been chosen, from all eternity, as the monuments of saving grace. But there is no ground for this opinion in truth. The Scriptures distinctly assure us, that the blood of Christ has been shed for all men, without distinction. And in consequence of this rich provision for the happiness of every sinner, the command has been given: "Go ye into all the world and preach the

Q. Were this not the case, for what would it be extremely difficult to account? From what did those intense agonies which he endured result? If we consider the sufferings of the Son of God as a mere example of devotedness to the will of his heavenly Father, what must we admit? Is the atonement limited or universal? What opinion has been and is still entertained by some in regard to the extent of the atonement? What do the Scriptures distinctly assure us? In consequence of this provision, what command has been given?

gospel to every creature." (Mark, xvi. 15.) It was the burden of the Angels' song which the astonished shepherds heard on the plains of Bethlehem: "Peace on earth and good will to men." When the apostles addressed the multitude on the day of pentecost, there were present not only Jews, but also Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Mesopotamians, and others; and when they inquired of Peter and the rest of the apostles: "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" the simple answer was: Repent and be baptized *every one of you*, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, *and to all that are afar off*, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." (Acts ii.) "The spirit and the bride, (the church) say come;" and Jesus says "Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest." The consequences of the fall are not more extensive than the benefits of gospel grace; (Rom. v. 20.) and as long as there is "balm in Gilead, and a physician there," every sinner may be healed, and snatched from the grasp of moral death. Has he despised every warning; has he been deaf to every call; has he passed by the strongest evidences of divine compassion which the gospel affords without halting in his guilty career; has he bowed to idols; is he a lover of the world; does he sustain the character of one of the vilest of the enemies of God; there is hope even for him if he can be persuaded to go to the fount of salvation. (Isa. i. 18.) What a vast design is that which aims to rescue *a world* from everlasting ruin!

e. Conditions of salvation. The very constitution of

Q. What did the apostle say to the multitude assembled on the day of pentecost? Of whom was this multitude composed?

man as a free moral agent, *requires* certain terms to be annexed to the offered blessings of the gospel. For Christ died, not to *force* upon the acceptance of the sinner, enjoyments for which he has no taste, and which he does not desire to possess; but to open a way of access to the mercy seat, for those who, alarmed at the consequences of sin, wish to escape from its everlasting penalty. These terms, on which God proposes to accept the sinner, are *Repentance* and *Faith*.

1. *Saving faith* may be said to consist in the conviction of sin and its dreadful consequences, and the impossibility of justification by works; in the persuasion that Christ has died for the sins of all mankind in general, and of every individual in particular; and that the atonement he offered is all-sufficient, as a satisfaction to the divine law. It also consists in the appropriation of the offered salvation of the gospel, on the part of the sinner, to his own soul; and in his self-consecration to the service of the great Deliverer.

2. *Repentance*. This is *based* on the conviction of the excellency of that law which we have broken; the consequences involved in its violation; and the goodness of God which has ever been manifested to every sinner, and which renders every act of transgression an evidence of base ingratitude. It *consists* in a deep and heart-felt sorrow for all the sins we have committed, and in a more extended sense *includes* obedience to the moral law. Hence the sacred writers sometimes mention faith and works, as the conditions of salvation, (James, ii. 10;) at other times

Q. What does the very constitution of man as a free moral agent, require? For what did Christ die? What are the conditions of salvation? In what does saving faith consist? On what is repentance based? In what does it consist? In a more extended sense, what does it include?

repentance and faith; (Mark, i. 15,) and at others again *faith* alone, (Acts, xiii. 39;) which, when separately spoken of, may be said to embrace the whole.

f. From these considerations it is evident, that although the offers of gospel grace are free and comprehensive, *they do not destroy human responsibility.* Instead of lessening, the gospel dispensation has increased the accountability of man. "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses; of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" (Heb. x. 28-9.) It is a principle of strict and impartial justice: "to whom much is given, of him much will be required." And they who enjoy the light of the gospel, and yet live in a state of impenitence and guilt, despise the blood that purchased their redemption. The Lamb of God, though he stands in the attitude of fond and earnest entreaty, is to them an object of no interest. They slight all his appeals; disregard all the proofs of his affection; and turn away from all the evidences of his power to save the soul, and secure to it the everlasting favor of God. To sin thus, is to challenge the Almighty to send down the heaviest inflictions of his wrath; and in every case of this kind the gospel becomes powerless, and of no avail.

Q. When the sacred writers mention faith alone as the condition of salvation, what may it be said to embrace? From these considerations, what is evident *f*? What effect has the gospel dispensation upon human accountability? What may be said of those who enjoy the light of the gospel and yet live in a state of impenitence? What does the gospel become in every case of this kind?

IV. *Justification.*

a. Is that judicial act of the Lawgiver which cancelst the sinner's guilt, and absolves him from punishment. That is, whenever he complies with the terms of reconciliation, he is treated by the Creator just as if he had never violated the moral law; and the soul is restored to all that spiritual and eternal joy, which a state of innocence, and perfect obedience, would have secured to it.

b. But the diligent use of the means of grace, and the compliance of the sinner with the terms of salvation, though necessary to justify him before God, are not to be considered as the *meritorious cause* of his justification. Far from it. The gift of eternal life is "unmerited and free;" and the atoning merits of Christ alone can inspire the hope of heaven. It is therefore essential,

aa. That we look away from ourselves, and direct our unceasing attention to the Lamb that was slain. It also becomes us,

bb. To cultivate a spirit of *humility*, and to cherish a continual sense of the imperfection of our best services, so that we may never lose sight of the righteousness of Christ, as the only refuge set before us in the gospel.

V. *The Saviour's Resurrection.*

This truth is established on the same evidence which supports every other doctrine of divine revelation. And it is highly interesting to the believer, because it ranks among the most essential doctrines of the New Testament.

Q. What is justification? How is the sinner treated when he complies with the terms of salvation? Is this act of the sinner to be regarded as the meritorious cause of his justification? What then is it to be considered in this light? What is essential therefore *aa*? What spirit must we cultivate? Why must we cherish a continual sense of the imperfection of our best services? On what evidence is the Saviour's resurrection established? Why is this truth highly interesting to the believer?

“If Christ be not risen,” says Paul, “then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.” (1 Cor. xv. 14.) The importance of this truth will appear from the following considerations :

a. In the primitive age of the church the resurrection of Christ served to confirm and enlarge the views of the apostles in regard to the Messiah’s character ; and to impart strength to their determination of attachment to his cause.

b. This event was also an evidence to *others*, that the persecuted Jesus was a great prophet, if not the Messiah. The wisdom of God was displayed in a peculiar manner, when he suffered the sixty Roman guards to be stationed at the tomb of our Saviour, because they became so many witnesses of his greatness. When these men returned to the chief priests, and described the scene that had just transpired, they felt all its reality, and they knew that no deception could have been practised in such a transaction. There was the voice of the earthquake, and the appearing of the angel, and the rolling away of the stone from the entrance of the sepulchre, to fill them with astonishment, and to subdue them with fear. The spectacle was too grand, too appalling, to be the work of imposition, and they fell to the ground, and became as dead men ; and questioned, as they must have been, by the interested multitude, it is altogether probable, that they related their opinion, privately, to many individuals, and thus confirmed in the minds of others, the belief of the Saviour’s divinity.

Q. What says Paul in regard to it ? What purpose did the resurrection of Christ serve in the primitive age of the church ? Of what was this event an evidence to others ? Of what did the Roman guards become the witnesses ? Why could there have been no deception in this event ? What effect did it have upon the guards ? To whom did they probably relate their private opinion concerning this transaction ?

c. This event also affords the assurance to every believer that "*death, the last enemy, will be destroyed,*" and that the eternal consequences of sin will be averted from the soul, by Him who has gained this signal triumph over "death, hell, and the grave." (1 Cor. xv. 26.)

d. And finally, it is an earnest to the Christian of his own resurrection, and places the doctrine of "life and immortality" in full and unclouded light. (1 Cor. xv.)

VI. *The ascension of Christ into Heaven.*

After a short interval, which was chiefly spent among his disciples, and after he had commissioned the apostles to proclaim the glad news of salvation to all the nations of the earth, he suddenly disappeared from their astonished sight, and was received up into heaven. (Luke, xxiv. 51.) In this exalted state he reigns, and is destined to reign throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. There angel harps and voices praise him; and there he is an object of supreme delight to that countless multitude who surround the throne of God. And, what is of special interest to man,

a. *He is there our mediator*, listens to the prayers of those who bow before the mercy seat; and intercedes with his Father for every humble, penitent, believing soul. (Heb. vii. 25.) So that the sinner may approach the throne of grace, confident that his cry will ascend to that mighty deliverer, who has purchased our redemption with his own blood.

b. *He also listens to those daily supplications which arise from the hearts of his people*, and grants in reply

Q. What assurance does this event afford to every believer c? Of what further is it an earnest to the Christian d? What commission did Christ give to the apostles, just before his ascension into heaven? In his present exalted state, what office does Christ perform a? What does he grant in answer to the prayers of his people?

to them, the strengthening influences of his divine spirit. Sustained by these, the most humble believer is enabled to carry on a conflict with the temptations of life, and with all the enemies of his everlasting peace. (Phil. iv. 13.)

c. Christ will be our judge. (2 Tim. iv. 1.)

d. And finally, he will be the *companion* of those who have been made kings and priests unto God through his intercession. There is no truth of revelation that imparts greater happiness than this. For to what higher honor can man aspire, than to be associated with Christ forever, in the most endearing relation! Familiar with all those scenes and sources of enjoyment which lie scattered throughout the boundless empire of Jehovah, he will perhaps conduct the emancipated spirit from world to world, to hold communion with kindred spirits, and to study with intelligence the majesty, power, and benevolence of God; whilst its profoundest gratitude is ever awakened by the story of his own matchless love.

It is evident, that the plan of redemption revealed in the gospel owes its origin to the fall of man from a state of holiness; that there is a moral tendency in the soul to violate the righteous requirements of the Creator; that this tendency is universal and unconquerable; and that everlasting death is its certain and inevitable consequence. To strike off the shackles of sin, and to set the soul free from its dominion, Christ came, and suffered, and died. And the question naturally occurs, why is it that the

Q. Strengthened by the influences of the divine spirit, what is the believer enabled to do? What is Christ called in 2 Tim. iv. 1? What will Christ finally be to those who have been made kings and priests unto God *d*? What is the highest honor to which man can aspire? To what does the plan of redemption owe its origin? What moral tendency exists in the human soul?

world still lies in wickedness, that the bonds of its iniquity are yet unbroken, and that the arrangements of infinite mercy are unheeded, if not despised? Nothing else than *the groundless persuasion of his safety*, can induce the sinner to remain in that state of spiritual disease which must bring death as its consequence, unless the healing efficacy of the blood of the Lamb is applied. Man is apt to believe that his moral constitution is unimpaired, whilst there is in truth no soundness in it; or else he imagines that the disease is not so dreadful in its nature as to require immediate attention. The great physician is always ready, and the saving influence of the gospel may be at any time applied, is the language of the deceiver, which ever puts his awakened fears to rest. But as long as he continues in this state of carnal security, his disease hourly assumes a more threatening aspect; he rushes on from one act of sin to another, and accumulates the evidences of his enmity to God.

The disease of the soul is essentially different from that of the body, not only in its nature, but also in its influence upon the decisions of the mind. The former is not apt to awaken our fears as effectually as the latter. Born in a state of health, our bodily strength is no sooner prostrated by disease, than we anxiously employ the means of restoration. But the impaired condition of our moral powers does not alarm us, *because we have been created* with unholy passions and evil desires; and it is

Q. What is its certain and inevitable consequence? Hence, for what purpose did Christ die? What question naturally occurs here? What can induce the sinner to remain spiritually diseased? What is the sinner apt to believe? What is the language that puts his fears to rest? As long as he continues in this state of carnal security what becomes of him? Which is most apt to awaken our fears, the disease of the body, or that of the soul? Why are we not as anxious about the latter as we are about the former?

easier for the soul to submit to the these, than to tread in a new and untried path.

But though it is easy to account for the readiness with which man opposes the will of his Creator, and the security he feels whilst dead in trespasses and sins; it is as easy to prove that this depraved state of the soul involves its everlasting interests, and that its restoration to health and purity is absolutely essential to its enjoyment. And if we reason from analogy, we cannot escape the conviction, that every moment's delay to apply the remedy afforded in the gospel, only contributes to the decay of its powers, and the more fatal prostration of its hopes. As the neglected disease of the body hurries on the approach of natural death; so the neglected disease of the soul renders the moral ruin of the sinner more certain.

Reader! Are you secure as long as you fondly and perseveringly cherish a spirit of resistance to the plain dictates of duty; are you happy; and do the smiles of an approving conscience beam upon your path; or is there a 'still small voice' within, that awakens the apprehension of impending danger? The river of Salvation, issuing forth from the fountain of the Redeemer's blood, is rapidly flowing to all the nations of the earth; and the voice of God himself invites *you* to plunge, with all your guilt, beneath its still, deep waters. Be persuaded then, to put forth every effort for the attainment of that peace which passeth all understanding; and urged on by the grateful recollection of the rich and exhaustless provisions of divine grace, let the language of your heart be,

Q. What does this depraved state of the soul involve? What is essential to its enjoyment? If we reason from analogy what conviction is it impossible to escape? What should be the language of the heart of every sinner?

“Here Lord I give myself away,
’Tis all that I can do.”

ARTICLE THIRD.

The third article treats of our sanctification. It reads as follows :

“I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic (universal) church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.” This article is thus explained:

“I believe that I cannot, merely by my own reason or other natural powers, believe in or come to Jesus Christ my Lord; but that the Holy Spirit hath called me by the gospel, enlightened me by his gifts, and sanctified and preserved me in the true faith, in like manner as he calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian church on earth, and preserves it in union with Jesus Christ by the true faith; in which Christian church he daily and richly forgives me, and all other believers, all our sins; and will at the last day raise up me and all the dead, and will grant unto me and all that believe in Jesus Christ, everlasting life. This is most certainly true.” (John, xv. 26. Acts, v. 3, 4. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Phil. i. 6. 1 Peter, i. 5. Eph. iv. 1, 6.)

This article has reference to—

I. *The work of the Holy Ghost.*

Previous to his crucifixion, the Saviour assured the apostles that the Father would send the *Comforter* in his name, who would bring all things to their remem-

Q. Of what does the third article treat? Rehearse it. What do you profess to believe in this article? To what does this article refer? What did the Saviour assure the apostles previous to his crucifixion? For what purpose was he sent?

brance, whatsoever he had told them. (John, xiv. 26.) And it is plain, from all the testimony which the sacred volume affords, that it is the office of the Holy Ghost to preside over the interests of the church, and the welfare of the human soul.

As to the *personality* of the Holy Spirit, conclusive evidence is afforded in the baptismal formula; (Matt. xxviii. 19,) and here also we have proof of his divinity and co-equality with the Father. Many other passages also sustain both these positions. (Matt. xii. 32. Rom. viii. 26. Acts, v. 3, 4. Heb. ix. 14.) The doctrine of the *Trinity* has been ably treated in the work entitled 'Popular Theology;' and to this work, which is a valuable gift to the church, and which ought to be in the hands of every Lutheran, the reader is referred. It may be remarked in general, however, that the same passages of scripture which prove the *divinity* of the Son and the Spirit, as well as their co-equality with the Father, necessarily establish the doctrine that *these three distinct persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are ONE GOD.*

a. One part of the work of the Spirit is to *call the sinner to repentance.* St. Peter says, in his second general epistle, (i. 21,) "The prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost.*" And thus, on the day of Pentecost, the apostles were *inspired* to proclaim the "wonderful works of God." Indeed, all the claims of the Bible as the basis of our faith, are established on the inspiration of its contents. And if so, then every statement

Q. What is the office of the Holy Ghost? Where have we conclusive evidence of his personality? Where of his divinity? What passages establish the doctrine that Father, Son and Holy Ghost are ONE GOD? You have said that it is the office of the Spirit to preside over the welfare of the soul—mention a distinct part of this work a.

of duty we read or hear, is a direct call from the Spirit of God. The Bible is only the medium of communication, and through this medium the Holy Ghost addresses us as manifestly, as one individual addresses another, in a letter written with his own hand, or at his request. How idle, then, for the sinner to *wait* for some special evidence of the Spirit's visitation. He is ever present in the Scriptures of eternal truth; he is present in the sanctuary; he is present within us, and frequently brings to remembrance the solemn convictions of duty. His language is, 'Why will ye die; escape for thy life; ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; the spirit and the bride say come;' and hence it follows, that whenever the truths of the gospel address the understanding without affecting the heart, the individual, thus indifferent to the solemn statements of duty, is guilty of resisting the Holy Ghost. (Acts, vii. 51.) What a reflection for those who have always lived in the full splendor of gospel light, and who have never yet passed that line of distinction which separates the enemies from the friends of God!

b. The spirit enlightens. We are not to suppose, however, that *reason* has nothing to do with the reception of the Bible as a rule of faith and a standard of action; on the other hand, it is the province of reason to examine its claims to a divine origin; to study those evidences of its authority and inspiration which are afforded, *a.* In the fulfilment of its prophetic declarations. *b.* In the miracles of Christ and his apostles. *c.* In the inherent excellence of Christianity itself, and *d.* In the triumphant progress

Q. Through what medium does the Holy Ghost address us? Where is he ever present? What is his language? Does he always address us whenever we hear or read the gospel? What else does the Spirit do *b*? What work has reason to perform?

of its principles, superseding every other system of belief, and bearing the conviction of its truth to the mind, through every opposing bias. When by means of these and other investigations of a like nature, reason discovers the Bible to be a divine revelation, all its doctrines, as the doctrines of eternal truth, are to become subjects of implicit belief; even *those* which are in a measure, or altogether, incomprehensible to the mind; for they are the disclosures of that Being "whose ways are past finding out," and are necessarily involved, more or less, in that mystery which envelops all the arrangements and decisions of the Almighty. But though it is the office of reason to examine the testimony that goes to establish the divine authority of the sacred scriptures, *reason could never have discovered* that system of truth which is brought to light in the Bible: and therefore it may be strictly said, that, in one sense, the Holy Ghost enlightens even those who have only a *theoretical* knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity, inasmuch as *all the disclosures of revelation are the illuminations of the Spirit*. That is, the Spirit imparts to the mind, through the word as the medium of communication, that knowledge of divine truth, which the unassisted investigations of reason would never have disclosed.

But it is also the office of the spirit to bring men to a *saving* knowledge of the truth. An individual may be

Q. When reason discovers the Bible to be a divine revelation, how are all its doctrines to be received? How is it with those that are incomprehensible? Is it to be inferred that because many of the doctrines of the Bible are incomprehensible, they are therefore opposed to reason? Are not many acknowledged truths incomprehensible? Mention some. Could reason have discovered the truths of revelation? In what sense then does the Holy spirit enlighten even those who have only a *theoretical* knowledge of the doctrines of Christianity? Whose office is it to bring men to a *saving* knowledge of the truth?

familiar with the *theory* of the gospel, and ready to admit its inspiration, whilst he refuses to yield to the influence of its doctrines, and continues far away from the kingdom of God. There are passions and prejudices in the human heart, which rise up against many, if not all the revelations of the Bible; and these passions and prejudices must be subdued, before truth can exercise its saving power. (1 Cor. ii. 14.) This subjugation of the natural enmity of the heart to the truth, it is the office of the spirit to effect. And when every bias of the sinner is overcome; when his fears are alarmed, and a sense of his ingratitude is awakened; when he beholds in the Lamb of God the only refuge for his guilty soul, and entertains a worthy conception of the beauty and the excellency of the moral law; the spirit then exerts an influence in the illumination of the mind, intimately connected with,

c. The sanctification of the heart. The *conviction of sin* is an incipient step to regeneration, and is produced by the spirit of God, through the word, as the instrument by means of which its divine energy is exerted.

The new birth, or *regeneration*, with which the sanctification of the sinner begins, takes place at the moment he exercises a saving faith in the atoning merits of Christ. Indeed the two, (regeneration and faith,) are inseparable, and may almost be considered identical; for a justifying faith supposes the total extinction of all the natural enmity of the heart against the truth, together with the en-

Q. When does the Spirit exert an influence in the illumination of the mind, intimately connected with the sanctification of the heart? What is an incipient step to regeneration? How is this produced? With what does the sanctification of the heart begin? When does this take place? What are inseparable? What does a justifying faith suppose?

tire change of its affections, hopes, inclinations, &c. The mental process that *leads* to this change is gradual, and consists in the investigation of the evidences of Christianity, and in weighing the reasons for and against the consecration of the heart to God; though even during such investigations, if carried on with a sincere aim at ultimate advantage, the Spirit is at work in the mind. But regeneration itself is necessarily instantaneous, because *there is a point of time* when the sinner resolves to throw himself into the arms of divine compassion, and to yield his will to the control of the divine law.

The *nature* of this change may be thus briefly illustrated. Once the affections of the heart were *criminal*, and pledged to the objects and pursuits of sin; now they are *holy*, and pledged to God, and the pursuits of holiness. Once, its hopes of happiness were all based upon the gratifications of sense, or the deeds of self-righteousness; now they are based upon Christ. Once, its inclinations impelled to the transgression of the divine law; now, they impel to the fulfilment of that law. *Love* is the predominating principle that regulates all its desires; love is the motive that originates all its decisions; LOVE, that great principle of action which so evidently pervades all the arrangements of divine Providence and grace, and which is the bond of union between all the holy subjects of the moral government of God.

Sanctification, properly so called, is that *progressive* work of the Spirit which commences at the moment of

Q. Is the mental process that leads to this change instantaneous or gradual? In what does it consist? If these investigations are conducted with a sincere desire to be benefited, what is at work in the mind? Is regeneration itself gradual? Why is it necessarily instantaneous? Illustrate briefly the nature of this change. What is the predominating principle that regulates all the desires of the new-born soul?

regeneration, and continues through life. It consists in the constant increase of spiritual knowledge and strength. As the believer advances in the divine life, and employs with diligence the means of grace, he acquires more enlarged conceptions of duty, and more enlightened views of the character of God, and the system of redeeming love. His ability to contend with sin is continually renewed, and ever on the increase; and though he can never expect to gain, in this life, such a complete ascendancy over himself, as to pursue, unchecked, the way of duty, he still aims, in obedience to the precept of Paul, (Heb. vi. 1,) at the attainment of all moral excellence, and at the highest degree of spiritual knowledge. And the Holy Ghost carries on the important work in his soul, makes every new effort of resistance to evil more easy and effectual than the last, and affords him more expanded conceptions of truth and moral obligation, as the result of the diligent and prayerful study of the sacred word. But the work of sanctification, though in a state of constant progression, is never completed here below; and hence the necessity of continual watchfulness through life, and a perpetual contest with all the enemies of our peace.

d. The Holy Ghost also *preserves* the believer in the true faith. As long as he is attentive to the means of grace and desirous of walking in the path of duty, he

Q. Is sanctification properly so called, a progressive work, or is it completed at the moment of regeneration? When does it commence? How long does it continue? In what does it consist? What can the believer never expect to gain in this life? What does he still aim at? Who carries on the important work in his soul? Of what are the Christian's expanded conceptions of truth and moral obligation the result? Though the work of sanctification is in a state of constant progression, what else may be said of it? Hence, what necessity follows? What other work does the Holy Ghost perform?

need not fear that the gracious influences of the spirit will ever be withdrawn. On the other hand, he has the assurance, that no degree of temptation will be sufficient to overcome his power of resistance, and that Satan will employ every effort in vain, to destroy the peace and the joy of his soul; for it is written: "my sheep hear my voice, and I know them and they follow me; and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." (John, x. 27, 28.) But we are not to infer from this the *absolute impossibility* of the believer's falling into a state of sin and unbelief, and exposing himself to the wrath of God. For, however far he may have progressed in holiness, it is evident that his free agency cannot be destroyed; and that *if he will* forfeit all his claims to the divine favor, no irresistible impulse can be exerted, consistently with this feature of his moral constitution. That the believer *may* depart from holiness, is also evident if we reason from *analogy*. Our first parents fell from a state of *innocence* into guilt, because they willed it; and how can we escape the inference that the believing sinner, who, at the most advanced point of his heaven-ward progress here on earth, is only in a state of partial sanctification, *may* resist that gracious influence which the spirit is ever willing to exert. And this position is conclusively established by the plain testimony of inspiration. St. Paul

Q. How long need he not fear that the influences of the spirit will be withdrawn? On the other hand what assurances has he? Are we to infer from this the *absolute impossibility* of the believer's falling into a state of unbelief? On what ground do you conclude that the believer *may* forfeit his claims to the divine favor? A. On the ground of his free agency. What is evident if we reason from analogy? From what state did our first parents fall? By what else is this position conclusively established?

in his epistle to the Hebrews (vi. 4-6.) says: "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. If they shall fall away (rather, *and have fallen away* *Και παραπέσοντας*) to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Nothing can be more emphatically and fully descriptive of the enlightened and devoted Christian than the language here employed. To say that it only describes consequences which *would* ensue, *were it possible* for the believer to fall from such an eminence, into the dark abyss of rank infidelity, but that we are not to infer from this the possibility of such an event; is nothing more or less than to assert, that the apostle warned those to whom he wrote to beware of consequences, which, in the very nature of the case could never transpire. Besides, the language of the sacred writer, (*Και παραπέσοντας*) as already remarked, is not conditional, but positive. It is not asserted however, nor is it to be supposed, that such a total change of views, feelings, and practices is of frequent occurrence; the *mere possibility* of the change is all that is contended for. And the fact that it *may* take place, only invests with a greater interest, and teaches the necessity of obedience to that precept which Christ addressed to his disciples: "What I say unto *you*, I say unto *all*—watch!" (Mark, xiii. 37; 1 Peter, i. 5.)

e. It is also the office of the spirit to guard the inter-

Q. Mention a passage which affords this testimony. Is it to be supposed that such a change is of frequent occurrence? What does the mere possibility of its occurrence teach?

ests of the church on earth *in its collective capacity*, and to "preserve it in union with Jesus Christ by the true faith," amid the most threatening corruptions of sentiment and practice. The history of the church during the dark ages, affords a cheering illustration of this superintending influence. For centuries previous to the protestant Reformation, the interests of Christianity were threatened, to all human appearances, with a signal and total destruction. But the holy flame of truth was gently fanned by an invisible agency; and though extinguished in the high places of the church, it beamed brightly in the cell of the monastic recluse, until it burst forth before the eyes of Europe and the world, to create a revolution of opinion, unequalled in the history of mind. And thus, during every period of the church's greatest depression, and when errors and schisms have most extensively and alarmingly prevailed, there have always been some who have "earnestly contended for the faith once delivered to the saints." And it is certain that truth will eventually predominate, and that its interests will be universally established, for "the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." (Matth. xvi. 18; xxiv. 35.) Enforced by the energy of that spirit from which they emanate, its principles will multiply their triumphs, until the day when "the lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down; and the Lord alone shall be exalted." And the assurance, that the spirit exercises this presiding care over the interests of the church, should give a strong impulse, and a broad expansion to the Christian's zeal;

Q. What other office does the Holy Spirit perform? What does the history of the church during the dark ages afford? Where was the light of truth preserved? What is certain in regard to truth?

for his efforts, however weak and ineffectual in themselves, may be made to contribute to the rapid advancement, and universal reign of gospel truth.

II. *Forgiveness of sins.* Of this the believer stands in daily need; for his best performances are necessarily imperfect, and he is frequently betrayed into acts of transgression, over which he is called upon to exercise a heartfelt and godly sorrow. And under this head we are reminded that—

a. It is essential to discharge the important duty of *self-examination*; to review at night the actions of the day, and to have still more frequent reference to the most prominent of our moral deviations, that we may be ever impressed with a sense of guilt.

b. *Prayer* is the appointed and effectual means of obtaining forgiveness, and consists in the humble confession of sin, and the plea for pardon, through the atoning merits of Christ.

c. But as we are guilty of many sins of which we are unconscious, and as the evidences of our moral imperfection necessarily mingle with all our actions, the prayers we offer must also allude to those faults, which, though unknown to ourselves, are treasured up among the records of omniscient God. They must also embrace every evil *thought* and *desire* cherished in the heart.

d. Nor can it be questioned whether *the aid of the spirit* is essential to the discharge of this duty. For it is written: (Rom. viii. 26.) “The spirit maketh *inter-*

Q. Of what does the believer stand in daily need? What may be said of his best performances? Into what is he frequently betrayed? What duty is it essential for him to discharge *a*? What is the appointed and effectual means of obtaining forgiveness *b*? In what does this effectual prayer consist? To what must our prayers allude *c*? What must they also embrace? What is essential to the discharge of this duty *d*?

cession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered." Its divine influence is exerted in giving a proper energy, direction and character, to the supplications of the believer; it humbles him under the conviction of his sinfulness, teaches him how to pray, and imparts that earnestness to his petitions which calls down the blessing required.

III. *The resurrection of the body.* This doctrine, which was denied by the Saducees, and is still rejected by many infidels of the present day, was emphatically taught by Christ and his apostles. It is indeed one of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity, (1 Cor. xv. 13.) and may be said to embrace the following truths.

a. The resurrection of the bodies of all mankind will take place at the end of the world; when the trump of God will sound to awaken the dead, and call into new life their sleeping dust. (1 Cor. xv. 52.)

b. The very same body which has been consigned to the earth, will be renovated, so as to become a fit habitation for the immortal soul during the period of its endless existence. (1 Cor. xv. 43.)

c. Those who live at the time of the resurrection will undergo a similar change; "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," their mortal bodies will put on immortality.

d. The renovated body will be capacitated for its everlasting existence, and for the peculiar employments of another world. Then will follow —

Q. Who maketh intercession for us? Where is this written? By whom was the doctrine of the resurrection rejected in the days of Christ? Who were the Sadducees? By whom is it rejected now? By whom was it emphatically taught? When will the resurrection of the bodies of all mankind take place? What body will be renovated *b*? What will take place in the case of those who live at the time of the resurrection *c*? For what will the renovated body be capacitated *d*?

e. The end of time; when the heavens (the visible firmament) shall be rolled together like a scroll, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat. (2 Peter, iii. 10.)

f. All nations will be assembled in the presence of the Judge, to be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body. (Rom. ii. 6.)

g. An everlasting separation will be made between the evil and the good. (Matth. xxv. 46.)

h. New heavens and a new earth will be created. (2 Peter, iii. 13.) The elements, thrown back into a state of chaos at the end of time, will be once more arranged; and this renovated earth will perhaps be the habitation of the righteous forever. In this case, the glory of the Lord will eclipse the brightness of the sun, and the faint light of the moon will be lost in the splendor of eternal day.

IV. *The punishment of the wicked.* The reality of this punishment, as well as the eternity of its duration, has been already proved. And in regard to its *nature* it has been observed, that it will consist in the endless exclusion of the soul from the presence of God and his holy angels. The Scriptures however teach us that it will not only be negative, but positive in its character; that is, the finally impenitent and unbelieving will not only be deprived of every source of joy, but as a necessary consequence, they will also be doomed to a state of actual and eternal suffering.

It is not necessary for us to suppose that the language of Scripture, on this subject, is literal; in all pro-

Q. What will follow *e*? What then *f*? What then *g*? What finally *h*? What will take place with the finally impenitent? In what will their punishment consist? Is the language of Scripture on this subject literal or figurative?

bability it is highly figurative; but this fact only serves to strengthen the conviction, that the agonies of condemned spirits are beyond conception intense. For that suffering must be dreadful in the extreme, which affects the soul, as the action of fire affects the body, and which will last as long as eternity.

Many have supposed that all the wicked will be congregated together in some remote province of Jehovah's empire; and that there, all the evil passions of their nature will be let loose, without being checked, or tempered, by the restraining influence of virtue. In this case, revenge, jealousy, and hatred would seek their unhallowed gratification; and there would be all the pain and every wish of dying, without the possibility of death. This everlasting contest of all the guilty passions of the heart, would indeed create a degree of suffering which no mind can conceive, and which it is impossible for human language to describe. The perpetual war of such discordant elements would be more fearful, and more desolating to happiness, than the mightiest convulsions of nature. But whatever theory we adopt on this subject, it is certain that the wicked "will be cast into outer darkness where there is weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" (Matth. viii. 12.) they will be the companions of the devil and his angels through a long eternity; (Matth. xxv. 41.) and one great source of their wretchedness, will be the thought of the many opportunities they have neglected, here on earth, of being reconciled to God; and as they gaze upon the raptures of the redeemed, the blest associates of the patriarchs, and

Q. What does this fact serve to strengthen? Where will the wicked be cast (Matt. viii. 12)? Whose companions will they be (Matt. xxv. 41)? How long? What will be one source of their wretchedness?

prophets, and apostles, and of Christ himself, the gloom and the misery of their own cheerless abode will appear darker and deeper in the contrast.

This state, as well as the happiness of the righteous, will commence immediately after death. We are taught that there is a place of departed spirits where the souls of the dead are congregated, and whence they will be called on the day of judgment. But even there, the line of separation between the wicked and the good, is distinctly drawn, (rich man and Lazarus.) This place is denominated in Scripture hades (*ᾅδης*) and the term which serves to designate it is employed in a sense entirely distinct from gehenna, (*γεέννα*) that "lake of fire" to which the souls of wicked men will be consigned with the devil and his angels, after death and hades shall be destroyed. (Rev. xx. 14, 15.)

V. *Everlasting life*, is declared to be the reward of the righteous in the world to come. Of the precise nature of this reward it is impossible to form any definite or worthy conception. Human language is declared to be inadequate to the representation of the bright scenes and eternal joys of heaven; and the figures employed by the sacred writers to describe it, are drawn from nature, in her most costly and enchanting forms. St. John says of that "great city, the new Jerusalem." (Rev. xxi.) "The foundations of the wall were garnished with all manner of precious stones. And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; and the street of the city was pure gold,

Q. When will this state commence? Where are the souls of the dead congregated? In what parable has Christ taught us that the wicked and the righteous are separated in this intermediate state? What is this place denominated in Scripture? What is the Scriptural term for hell? What is declared to be the reward of the righteous? What does St. John say of that great city, the New Jerusalem?

as it were transparent glass. And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honor into it. And the gate of it shall not be shut at all by day; for there shall be no night there." Here imagination may take her loftiest flight; she cannot soar beyond the limits of truth: for "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, *neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive* the things which God hath prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. ii. 9.) To dwell with ceaseless and ever-increasing rapture on the bright displays of divine love; to contemplate scenes of beauty and grandeur far excelling the loftiest conceptions of the human mind; to go on in the perpetual acquisition of knowledge; evermore to discover new sources of enjoyment; and to sing the everlasting praises of the Lamb, will constitute the employment of the redeemed through the countless ages of eternity.

PART THIRD,

OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

PRAYER IN GENERAL.

I. *The duty.* This may be inferred from the very relation in which we stand to God and our fellow-men.

a. The very belief that there is a God embraces the acknowledgment of this solemn and interesting obligation. For if we are persuaded that life and all its attendant blessings, together with the hope of immortality, are all derived from that infinite Being who "created the heavens and the earth," nothing can be more obvious, than the duty of pouring out our supplications and our thanks before *Him*. Gratitude for the rich proofs of his love should constrain us to speak forth his praise; and a sense of our utter dependence and unworthiness should humble us before him, and suggest to our hearts those confessions of guilt and those pleadings for mercy which, when offered sincerely, have never been offered in vain.

b. This duty is also inseparable from the relations we sustain in this world; and its performance is strongly and irresistibly urged by those feelings of benevolence, which the Christian entertains for all mankind.

Q. Of what does the third part of the Catechism treat? From what may we infer the duty of prayer in general? What embraces the acknowledgment of this solemn and interesting obligation *a*? What should constrain us to speak forth his praise? What should humble us before him? From what is the duty of prayer inseparable *b*? By what is its performance urged?

The various modifications of misery, both temporal and spiritual, that exist around us, cannot be contemplated without producing in every benevolent mind, the wish to adopt some means of alleviation. Nor can the believer regard without concern, the sufferings of the distressed, the oppressions of the helpless, the doubts and fears of the unenlightened, and the threatened doom of the impenitent; and he feels constrained to plead their cause before that Being who is the avenger of wrongs, and who has appointed the means of enlightening the mind and sanctifying the heart, and is able to conduct these means to a successful issue.

2. *Tendency of prayer.*

a. It brings man near to God. That the Almighty is at all times near to us, and ever ready to supply our temporal and spiritual wants, is evident from all the established regulations of his providence, which open to man a thousand sources of sensitive enjoyment; and no less so from the tender representations of his word. His ear is ever open to our confessions, our prayers, and our solemn vows. (1 Peter, iii. 12.) But the soul, whilst in a state of guilt, may be said to be far from God; and the first act which betokens its return to him is *prayer*. Thus the prodigal *came* to his father, and confessing his ingratitude, besought the privilege of performing the humble duties of a servant, inasmuch as he had forfeited every claim to the title and distinction of a son.

b. Prayer capacitates us for the reception of every spiritual blessing. The gifts of divine providence are

Q. What is the tendency of prayer *a*? What is evident from all the established regulations of the providence of God? But though God is always near to us, when may the soul be said to be far from God? Which is the first act that betokens a return to him? For what does prayer capacitate us?

scattered unconditionally, and the wicked, as well as the good, are the objects of Almighty protection. But *spiritual* blessings are only granted to those who "hunger and thirst after righteousness;" and the sincere prayer of the sinner is the evidence that this spiritual longing exists within his soul. As the beggar, who is in a state of actual starvation for want of the necessaries of life, implores relief from the hand of charity; so the sinner, when he becomes fully aware of his poverty and guilt as a moral being, does not hesitate to plead with the Father of mercies, for the exercise of his pardoning love. Prayer is therefore the manifestation of *our* willingness to receive those spiritual blessings which God is ever ready to bestow. Prayer is the act of compliance with that condition of salvation: "Ask, and it shall be given unto you; seek, and ye shall find." (Matth. vii. 7.)

3. *Spirit of Prayer.*

a. Our petitions should be offered in humility. They should breathe forth that deep contrition for sin, and exhibit that sense of personal unworthiness, which every sinner must feel, before he can avail himself of the benefits of Christ's atoning death. The respective prayers of the Pharisee and publican afford examples of that spirit of humility which should always pervade our petitions, and of that spirit of pride and self-righteousness, which should ever be absent.

b. Our petitions must also be characterized by a spirit of resignation. This is emphatically true when

Q. What gifts are scattered unconditionally? To whom are *spiritual* blessings granted? Of what is the sincere prayer of the sinner the evidence? Of what is prayer the manifestation? With what is prayer the act of compliance? In what spirit should our prayers be offered *a*? Of what do the respective prayers of the Pharisee and publican afford examples? By what else must our prayers be characterized *b*?

temporal blessings are the objects of desire. In reference to these the language of every heart should be: "Grant us all things that are needful for us, though we should neglect to pray for them; and deny us all things that would be hurtful to us, though we should most earnestly desire them." For the Almighty in his wise providence doubtless sees fit to withhold from us many objects of desire, which, if granted in answer to our prayers, would prove a curse, instead of a blessing. The following instance is a striking illustration of this truth. "A minister praying over a child apparently dying, said, 'if it be thy will, spare.' The poor mother's soul yearning for her beloved, she exclaimed, 'it *must* be his will, I cannot bear *ifs*.' The minister stopped. To the surprise of many the child recovered; and the mother, after almost suffering martyrdom by him while a stripling, lived to see him hanged before he was two and twenty years of age." Now it is not asserted that the recovery of this child depended on the impatient exclamation of its mother; but we may safely conclude, that consequences equally, and even more deplorable, would result from the fulfilment of all our desires. *But there are blessings for which we are commanded to pray earnestly and without ceasing.*

1. In regard to *others*. Christ himself in that form of prayer which he taught his disciples, has imposed the obligation upon all his followers, to offer supplications for the whole family of man. His language is, "thy

Q. When is this emphatically true? In reference to these, what should be the language of every heart? What does the Almighty, in his wise providence undoubtedly see fit to withhold? For what kind of blessings are we commanded to pray earnestly and without ceasing? A. Spiritual blessings.

kingdom come; thy will be done on earth, even as it is done in heaven." When the believer addresses these petitions to his God, he implores that the light of divine truth may be universally scattered throughout the earth; and that Christian joy, peace, hope, and love, may take up their abode in every family, and in every heart. And if these petitions are accompanied by a corresponding course of action, they will be heard and answered.

Our petitions may also be presented in behalf of *individuals*. A parent may pray for the salvation of his child. And the fact, that such prayers have been frequently answered in a remarkable manner, affords the strongest encouragement for the discharge of this interesting duty. Instances have been recorded of parents, who have made the case of an unconverted son the subject of their petitions at the throne of grace, when that son was far away from home, and far removed from the influence of parental precept and example; and in answer to these prayers the means of grace have been made effectual in his regeneration. The very fact, if known to the individual for whose welfare we feel interested, that his spiritual happiness is a special object of our pleadings with God, is apt to exert a decidedly favorable tendency. The following instance, related by Hannah More, is a case in point. "Mrs. C—— frequently sat up late reading such books as might qualify her for the education of her child, but always retired

Q. In what language has the Saviour taught us to pray for these blessings? When the believer addresses these petitions to his God, what does he implore? If these petitions are accompanied by a corresponding course of action, what follows? Special prayers for individuals have frequently been answered. What does this fact afford? If individuals are aware that we feel sufficiently interested in their spiritual welfare to pray for them, what influence is the knowledge of this fact apt to produce?

before she had reason to expect Mr. C — lest he might construe it into upbraiding. One night, as he was not expected to come home at all, she sat later than usual, and had indulged herself with taking her child to pass the night in her bed ; with her usual earnestness she knelt down and offered up her devotions by her bedside, and in a manner particularly solemn and affecting, prayed for her husband. Her heart was deeply touched, and she dwelt on these petitions in a strain peculiarly fervent. She prayed for his welfare in both worlds, and earnestly implored that she might be made the humble instrument of his happiness. She meekly acknowledged her own many offences : of his she said nothing. Thinking herself secure from interruption, her petitions were uttered aloud, her voice often faltering, and her eyes streaming with tears. Little did she suspect that the object of her prayers was within hearing of them. He had returned home unexpectedly, and coming softly into the room heard her pious aspirations. He was inexpressibly affected. He wept and sighed bitterly. The light from the candle on the table fell on the blooming face of his sleeping infant, and on that of his weeping wife. It was too much for him. He had not the generosity to come forward and express the admiration he felt. He withdrew unperceived, and passed the remainder of the night in a great perturbation of spirit. Shame, remorse, and confusion raised such a conflict in his mind as prevented him from closing his eyes ; while she slept in quiet and awoke in peace. * * * * He has by degrees dropped most of his former associates, and has entirely renounced the diversions to which they led him. His conduct is uniformly respectable, and I look forward with hope to his becoming a shining character.”

In reference to *ourselves*. We may safely and confidently ask for the pardon of all our transgressions, for the gift of eternal life; and for strength sufficient to resist temptation, to conquer sin, and to walk in the path of moral duty. These are blessings which we are commanded to seek, and which, if sought with earnestness, will assuredly be found. It is also right to pray for the necessaries and comforts of life; in a word, for every temporal gift which the Almighty in his wise and gracious Providence sees fit to bestow. These objects are evidently embraced in the petition, "give us this day, our daily bread."

c. All our prayers must be offered up in the name of Christ; simply because every spiritual gift bestowed upon the sinner, is conferred for his sake. Apart from Christ, we have not the shadow of a claim to the divine favor; and it is only through his mediation that the soul is elevated to its former standing, and reanimated with its forfeited joy.

4. *Social Prayer.* The very expression '*our father*,' denotes this duty.

a. It is a duty which devolves upon every Christian head of a family. Were it enforced by no other considerations than the results which flow from its faithful performance, it would still appear eminently important. These results have been already alluded to; and were altars consecrated to God, in all families professing to be

Q. In reference to ourselves, for what may we safely and confidently pray? If we seek these blessings what will be the result? For what else is it right to pray? In what petition of the Lord's prayer are these objects embraced? In whose name must all our prayers be offered *c*? For whose sake is every spiritual gift conferred? What expression in the Lord's prayer denotes the duty of social prayer? Upon whom does this duty devolve *a*?

Christian, it is certain that all the members of such families would entertain a higher reverence for the divine character, and cherish a more habitual sense of their dependence on the Almighty as the giver of all temporal and spiritual good. Indeed, there are few obligations more sacred; and there are but few more sadly neglected. Nor is it any apology for this neglect that we can utter nothing but broken accents in the presence of others, which cannot tend to edification. There are two considerations which render this apology groundless. In the first place, like every other duty, its performance is rendered more easy by practice; and if family prayer is a duty, our humble efforts to discharge it, however imperfect, will be pleasing in the sight of God. And in the second place, many excellent manuals of prayer have been prepared for family use by some of the most pious servants of the church. These forms are adapted to every circumstance of life, and to the feelings of every individual. *And if we only possess the spirit* that pervades them, we may employ the very language they contain acceptably to the Creator.

b. Meetings for prayer should also be established in every section of the church, and conducted by the members of every congregation These meetings are frequently appointed with reference to special objects; for instance, the circulation of the sacred Scriptures; the con-

Q. Were altars erected in all families professing to be Christian, what would be the result? Is there any excuse for neglecting this duty? How is its performance rendered more easy? In whose sight will the most humble effort to discharge this duty be pleasing? What spirit must we possess in order to use forms or manuals of prayer acceptably to the Creator? What kind of meetings should be established in every section of the church? Who should conduct these meetings? In reference to what objects are they frequently appointed?

version of the heathens; the success of domestic missions, etc. To this class belongs the monthly concert.

It is an important object of social prayer, to implore that the enlightening and sanctifying influences of the Spirit may give efficacy to the preaching of the word, *as regards ourselves, and those immediately around us.* The ministers of the gospel must scatter the seed of truth in vain, unless the showers of divine grace descend upon it, and the beams of the sun of righteousness warm it into life. "A Paul may plant, and an Apollos water; but it is God alone who gives the increase." And it becomes a matter of serious inquiry, whether the members of a congregation do not neglect a very important duty, when they refuse to assemble, in order to offer their *united* prayers, that the triumphs of redeeming grace may be multiplied around them, and that a sense of moral obligation may be more abidingly impressed upon their own hearts. Certain it is, that were meetings of this kind to be held on the Sabbath, throughout the length and breadth of the church, just before the services of public worship commence, they would, in a measure, prepare the mind for the solemnities of the sanctuary, and give additional efficacy to the established means of grace. In many congregations this course has been pursued, and the results have been invariably cheering, both to ministers and people. Indeed, no congregation can expect vital religion to flourish among them, unless they pray with fervency for copious effusions of the spirit of God; and as *social* prayer is a plain duty, the propriety and the expediency of their *united* supplications for this object, cannot be questioned. (Matt. xviii. 19.)

Q. What is an important object of social prayer? What is necessary to cause the seed of divine truth to take root in the heart?

“Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.” (Matt. vi. 9–13.)

“Forms of prayer were frequent among the Jews; and every public teacher gave one to his disciples.” Thus John taught his disciples. (Luke xi. 1.)

The Lord's prayer, (so called because Christ gave it to his disciples when they desired him to teach them how to pray,) is an admirable example of that simplicity which should characterize all our petitions at the throne of grace. (Matt. vi. 7.) It is recorded rather as a *model* than a *form*; but, though it is not to be employed on all occasions indiscriminately, the propriety, nay, the *obligation*, of its frequent use cannot be denied. Thus it may be used daily in our families, and in our private devotions; nor can it be out of place when introduced into the public services of the sanctuary; for it expresses the wants of all mankind, and may therefore be profitably offered by the members of every congregation, if they only possess the *spirit* of prayer. The spirit is indeed at all times essential, and it should always be the petition of every heart; “Lord, teach us to pray.” (Luke xi. 1.)

Luther has divided the Lord's prayer into three parts: 1. Introduction; 2. Petition; 3. Conclusion.

Q. Repeat the Lord's prayer. What were frequent among the Jews! Why is the Lord's prayer so called? Of what is it an admirable example? When may it be employed? What spirit is essential when we use this prayer? What should always be the petition of every heart? Into how many parts has Luther divided the Lord's prayer?

1. *Introduction.*

“Our Father, who art in heaven.”

“Our Saviour teaches us in this preface, that God would affectionately invite us to believe, and to be assured that he is truly our Father, and that we are his children indeed; and to call upon him with all cheerfulness and confidence, even as beloved children entreat a kind and affectionate parent.” (1 John iii. 1-3: 1 Peter i. 3-5.)

a. In a *general* sense, God is the father of all men. He sustains this relation to the whole human family as their creator, preserver and benefactor.

b. But in the New Testament he is called the Father of those who believe in Christ, in a *peculiar* sense. There is no moral tie between the sinner and the Almighty. As long as man remained in a state of innocence, he was emphatically and truly the son of God; for in this state he possessed the moral likeness of his Maker. But in consequence of sin, all the rights of sonship were forfeited; and the transgression of the law resulted in man's separation from that family of holy beings, who continually worship and obey the Almighty, as their supreme head. But when sin, the cause of this separation, is taken away from the soul; and when the sinner is justified through Christ; he again becomes, *by adoption*, the son of God, and the heir of everlasting joy. (Rom. viii. 14, 15.) It follows, that none but believers can look

Q. Repeat the introduction. What does our Saviour teach us in this preface? In a general sense, of whom is God the Father? How does he sustain this relation to the whole human family? How is this title applied to him in the New Testament? Why was man emphatically and truly the son of God while in a state of innocence? What were forfeited in consequence of sin? In what did the transgression of the law result? In what way does the sinner become the son of God when he is justified through Christ? (Rom. viii. 14, 15.) What follows?

to God as their father, in the strictest and most interesting sense of the title; for every sinner must receive "the spirit of adoption," before he can cry, "Abba, Father."

c. They who have the assurance that God is their father, and that they are his children indeed, *will call upon him* (in accents of prayer and praise) *with all cheerfulness and confidence*. The Scriptural representations of the divine character, are intended to inspire us, not only with sentiments of reverence, but also with feelings of fond endearment. The Almighty stands to all his chosen people in the relation of a most devoted friend. (Isa. xlix. 15.) We are therefore encouraged to approach him in our petitions with all that frankness, candor, and filial confidence and joy, which exist in the mind of a favorite and beloved child, who is persuaded that his earthly parents will refuse him no gratification, consistent with *his* interests and *their* duty.

d. "Who art in heaven." God is indeed present every where; (Ps. cxxxix. 7-10.) nor can the heaven of heavens contain him. (1 Kings viii. 27.) But his presence and his glory are displayed in a peculiar manner where angels and the spirits of the blest forever dwell. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." (Ps. ciii. 19.)

e. The fact that God is thus infinitely exalted, *should fill every heart with admiration of his condescending love*. Though his throne is established in the heavens,

Q. What will they do who have the assurance that God is their father and that they are his children indeed? With what are the Scriptural representations of the divine character intended to inspire us? In what relation does the Almighty stand to his chosen people? How are we therefore encouraged to approach him? How do you understand the phrase, "Our Father *who art in heaven*?" What influence should the fact that God is thus infinitely exalted, exert upon us?

and though his glory cannot be increased by the loftiest praises which men, or even angels can utter; he has revealed himself to the sinner as a prayer-hearing and sin-forgiving God, and has declared his willingness to be reconciled to every one of our guilty race.

First Petition.

“Hallowed be thy name.”

“God’s name is indeed holy in itself; but we pray in this petition, that it may also be sanctified by *us*.”

“This is effected when the word of God is taught pure and unadulterated, and we, as the children of God, live holy lives, conformably to its precepts. To this, may the Lord our Father in heaven, incline us! But he whose doctrine and life are contrary to the word of God, dishonors the name of God among us. From this preserve us, O God, our heavenly Father!”

a. When the believer employs this language, he prays for a spirit of obedience to the second commandment; “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.” He prays that he may be preserved from the awful sins of blasphemy and perjury, and every other manifestation of irreverence for the divine character.

b. He also prays that “the word of God may be taught pure and unadulterated.” As the truths of the Bible have been proclaimed to afford us just and worthy conceptions of the attributes of the Almighty, these truths cannot be misrepresented without derogating from the glory of God, and impressing upon the human mind erroneous views of his adorable perfections. Thus, for instance, the doctrine

Q. How has he revealed himself to the sinner? Rehearse the first petition. How is this to be understood? When is this effected? For what does the believer pray when he employs the language of this petition? What else does he pray in this petition?

of *limited atonement* is a direct charge of partiality against that Being, with whom, we are assured, there is no respect of persons.

c. Again: The believer prays in this petition *that truth may present itself to his own mind* in all its distinctness and beauty, and that it may impress him with an abiding sense of the greatness, majesty, power, justice, holiness, and benevolence of the Creator. He prays that he may be taught to entertain a just view of all the perfections of the divine nature, and that he may ever cherish, for these perfections, the profoundest reverence and love.

d. He prays, too, that he may be led to *respect the will of the Almighty*, and that all his desires, feelings, and actions may be regulated and controlled by the perfect law of God; so that God may be honored in all the performances of a holy life.

e. He prays that the knowledge of the Lord may be speedily and universally scattered over the whole earth; so that all the nations may learn to reverence and adore the King of kings.

f. To cherish sentiments therefore diametrically and plainly opposed to the truth, or to pursue a line of conduct which the divine law condemns, is to betray the absence of every sentiment of respect for the Creator's character and will. "From this preserve us O Lord, our heavenly Father!"

Second Petition.

"Thy kingdom come."

"The kingdom of God will come indeed without our prayers; but we pray in this petition that it may also come unto us."

Q. Who betrays the absence of every sentiment of respect for the will and character of God? Rehearse the second petition.

“This is effected, when our heavenly Father gives us his holy Spirit, so that, by his grace, we believe in his holy word, and live a godly life, here in time, and in heaven forever.” (Rom. xiv. 17, 18. 2 Tim. iv. 18.)

a. The promises of God distinctly assure us that “the gates of hell shall not prevail against his church.” This proves to us that every effort to destroy the interests of the kingdom of God will be unavailing, and that the progress of everlasting truth will be onward, until every heart is subdued under its mighty convictions. And these results are independent of the will of man, for they have been determined in the immutable counsels of the Almighty. But —

b. We pray in this petition *that the Spirit of God may reign in our own hearts*, and exercise supreme control over our depraved nature. We pray that we may be enabled to lay aside all our besetting sins, and to manifest, with ever increasing ardor, our supreme love to the Creator, our reverence for his character, our gratitude for his benevolence, our fear of his displeasure, and our devotion to the interests of his cause; in a word, that we may be enlightened, regenerated, and sanctified, and prepared for the joys of heaven. As already remarked, the gift of eternal life will never be conferred upon us, unless we first comply with that condition of its bestowment, “Ask, and ye shall receive.” So that, although our prayers are *not* necessary to secure the universal establishment of the kingdom of God, and although Christ will reign

Q. How is this to be understood? When is this effected? What do the promises of God distinctly assure us *a*? What does this prove? Of what are these results independent? Where have they been determined? What do we pray in this petition *b*? On what does the gift of eternal life depend? What are our prayers *not* necessary to secure?

and truth triumph without them, *they are indispensably essential* to the salvation of our own souls.

c. But though "the kingdom of God will come indeed without our prayers," and though its universal establishment is among the cherished purposes of Jehovah, we are not, on this account, the less obligated to pray for the advancement of its interests. On the other hand, this very truth originates the obligation, and renders it binding. For it would be morally wrong; nay more, it would be impious, to pray for any event to which the designs of God are plainly opposed; but as he has determined that his kingdom shall come, our sincere prayers for the speedy fulfilment of this animating assurance, must be well pleasing to him; simply, because *they manifest that we feel interested in the promotion of the divine glory, and the universal dissemination of gospel truth.* This interest every Christian ought to cherish, and for this event, (the salvation of the world,) he ought constantly to pray.

aa. Firstly, in reference to *our immediate friends and acquaintances* we should employ this petition. We should pray for the salvation of a parent, brother, sister, wife, husband, or child.

bb. We should also employ this petition *in reference to all mankind.* Millions of the human race are yet destitute of the knowledge of God, and bow to idols; and

Q. To what are they indispensably essential? But though the kingdom of God will come indeed without our prayers, what are we still obligated to do? For what would it be morally wrong to pray? What has he determined in regard to his kingdom? How then does he regard our prayers for this event? Why does he regard them thus favorably? For what then ought the Christian constantly to pray? In reference to whom firstly should he employ this petition aa? In reference to whom besides, should he employ it bb?

in the midst of these millions the standard of the cross is to be erected, and the everlasting gospel preached. (1s. ii. 2, 4.) With what fervency, then, should every believer address the prayer to God, "Let thy kingdom come;" let the glad tidings of salvation be proclaimed throughout the earth, and let all the nations embrace Christ as their Saviour and King.

d. It may be remarked here, once for all, that these petitions will be of no avail, *unless they who offer them pursue a corresponding course of action.* For instance, it would be presumption in the extreme, to pray for the supply of our daily temporal wants, and yet make no effort for our subsistence; nor can it be expected that such a prayer would be answered. And so the petition now under consideration involves a plain and momentous duty, and whenever the believer employs the language of this petition at the throne of grace, he acknowledges his individual obligation, to promote the end, for whose accomplishment he devoutly prays. For though the fulfilment of the divine purposes does not necessarily depend on the will or the efforts of any creature, in this instance, God has graciously designed to effect them by means of human instrumentality. Every disciple of Christ is a steward in the household of his divine master, intrusted with the weighty interests of his cause, and bound to promote these interests to the extent of his ability. When, therefore, we *pray* for the salvation of our relations and acquaintances, there must be a correspond-

Q. What is necessary to render these petitions availing? Under what circumstances would it be presumptuous to pray for the supply of our daily temporal wants? What does the petition now under consideration involve? What does the believer acknowledge whenever he employs this petition at the throne of grace? By what means has God graciously designed to effect the universal establishment of his kingdom?

ing *effort* for their salvation. In our intercourse with them, we must manifest the concern we feel for their spiritual good ; we must display a pious example, and direct their attention to the means of grace. Does the devoted mother long for the spiritual happiness of her child, she must pray *with* that child, as well as *for* it, and by her admonitions, precepts, and example, guide it in the way of peace.

And thus *in regard to mankind in general*. Millions are yet enveloped in the darkness of heathenism, or in the grossest superstition and error. Do we wish to see these millions enlightened by the rays of truth, and placed in full possession of all those privileges which Christianity confers, and inspired with all those hopes which arise from faith in the doctrines of divine revelation ? How necessary, then, that our exertions should accompany our prayers ! What doth it profit, if we say to the distressed, "Be ye warmed and filled, and give them not those things which are needful to the body ?" (James, ii. 16.) What the inspired penman says in this connection of faith, may with the strictest propriety be applied to *prayer* ; without works it is dead, being alone. Nor is it enough that we say in our addresses to God, Let the heathen be enlightened ; let ignorance, superstition, wickedness, and error, be banished from the earth ; and let thy kingdom come, and be established in every heart ; we must also *employ the means*, in as far as we possess them, to accomplish these great and interesting ends.

Many of the benevolent institutions of the age afford op-

Q. When we pray for the salvation of our friends and acquaintances, what course of action must we pursue ? If we wish to see the millions enlightened who are now destitute of the light and privileges of Christianity, what is necessary ?

portunity for the active and constant employment of the energies of the whole church. For instance, every one who contributes to the funds of the Bible Society, accelerates the progress of that stream of knowledge and eternal life, which is destined to flow on until it reaches the ends of the earth. And the great amount of good that may here be accomplished by the smallest means, should be a source of encouragement to all; an incentive to universal action. Even the widow's mite, if appropriated to this noble object, (the circulation of the Bible,) may be instrumental in the conversion of many souls. A single shilling will purchase a testament, and that very testament, bearing the messages of peace and salvation to some distant section of our own, or foreign lands, may cause a whole family or neighborhood to rejoice; and the sanctified influence of what it reveals may extend down to the remotest generations. *Tract, missionary, education, and temperance* associations, have an equal claim on the *active exertions*, as well as prayers, of every follower of Christ. They are so many channels of benevolence, which may bear the offerings of the Christian to every part of our benighted, sinful world.

It is evident, therefore, that our prayers must not be *independent* of our efforts; they must be invariably associated together. *It is right* to pray, that the exertions of the church to bring all men to the saving knowledge of the truth, may accomplish their interesting purpose; but *it is not right* to pray for such an event unless the efforts of the church aim to secure it. A prayer *without action* is a

Q. What do many of the benevolent institutions of the age afford? Of what should the great amount of good that may here be accomplished by the smallest means, be a source? What may be the effect of the "widow's mite?" What is evident therefore, from all this?

prayer *without life*; it is heartless and worthless; it is the prayer of avarice or cold formality; Christian benevolence disclaims it.

Nor does the activity of the most devoted, perhaps, correspond with the fervor of their petitions. We pray, indeed, that the kingdom of God may come; but when we consider the great work yet to be accomplished before this prayer will be fully answered; there is certainly a degree of apathy in the church, which the circumstances of the case by no means justify. May the spirit of zeal, already awakened, become more and yet more intense, and may its warm glow animate the heart of every believer until the concentrated energies of the church shall be put forth to enlighten and regenerate the world! Then may we pray with confidence 'thy kingdom come;' for *then it will come*, and be gloriously established over the whole earth. Christian! are you in the path of duty!

Another question presents itself here, which it may be well to answer. *Is that spirit of sectarian antipathy which exists in the church, favorable to the advancement of its interests; or is it one of the most effectual and alarming causes of their slow and retarded progress?* Doubtless, the existence of this spirit is a mighty barrier in the way of the conversion of the world. Nor can any individual consistently pray, 'thy kingdom come,' as long as he fondly cherishes in his heart that feeling of uncharitableness, which induces him to look upon every effort made for this purpose, by the members of another denomination, with a suspicious eye. The duty of

Q. What may be said of a prayer without action? What may be said of the activity of the most devoted? Is the spirit of sectarian antipathy favorable to the advancement of the interests of the church? Of what is it one of the most effectual and alarming causes?

the church, in its *united* capacity, calls for the exercise of confidence, forbearance, and love, *on the part of every individual Christian.*

Third Petition.

“Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.”

“God’s good and gracious will is done, indeed, without our prayers ; but, in this petition we pray, that it may also be done by us.”

“This is effected, when God prevents and destroys all evil counsels and intentions, the will of the devil, of the world, and of our own flesh, which tend to dishonor the name of God among us, and hinder the coming of his kingdom to us ; and when he strengthens and preserves us steadfast in his word and faith, unto our end. This is his good and gracious will.” (1 John, ii. 17. Rom. xii. 1, 2. John, vi. 40.)

We pray in this petition—

a. In regard to ourselves, that the disposition and the ability to obey the law of God, may be implanted within us. We pray that evil desires and passions may be rooted from the soul, that we may be preserved from every act of moral violation, such as perjury, lying, stealing, intemperance, slander, &c. ; and that we may be led on in the practice of every virtue. We pray that the spirit may ever *preserve* us in the path of duty, and enable us to persevere even unto the end. Every believer must be aware of his dependence on a higher than human power, for all the moral strength and courage that animate him in his conflict with temptation ; and he feels

Q. For what does the duty of the church, in its united capacity, call ? Rehearse the third petition. How is this to be understood ? When is this effected ? What do we pray in this petition, in regard to ourselves ? Of what must every believer be aware ?

the daily need of that divine influence which cometh down from above. *The spirit* has enlightened his mind and regenerated his heart. The spirit, through the word, has impressed him with the conviction of sin ; afforded him right conceptions of duty ; displayed to his view the beauty, excellency, and consistency of the divine law ; and created within him a willingness to obey that law, and to announce his allegiance to God. And aware of his moral imperfection, and sensible that the spirit alone can help his infirmities, (Rom. viii. 26,) and that he can do all things through Christ, (Phil. iv. 13,) it is his daily petition at the throne of grace, "Help me, O God, to do thy will, to glorify thy name, and to shew forth thy praise in every action of my life."

We also pray in this petition for a *spirit of resignation*. Sometimes, the most favorite plans miscarry, and the fondest wishes are denied. But the Christian, even when the severest chastisements and trials afflict him, should employ the language of his master when about to endure sufferings which have no parallel on earth : "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me ; nevertheless, not *my* will, but *thine*, be done." (Matt. xxvi. 39.)

b. In regard to others ; we are taught to pray that the same disposition to obey the requirements of God, which exists among the angels of heaven, may be implanted in the hearts of all men ; that their evil passions may be subdued ; their sinful natures changed ; and all their powers of body and mind, pledged to the service of the Creator.

Q. Of what does he feel the daily need ? What has enlightened his mind and regenerated his heart ? With what has the spirit impressed him ? What has it afforded him ? What has it displayed to his view ? For what do we also pray in this petition ? What language should the Christian employ even when the severest trials afflict him ? What are we taught to pray in regard to others ?

Fourth Petition.

“Give us this day our daily bread.”

“God bestows indeed, unasked, the necessaries and conveniences of life, even upon the wicked; but in this petition we pray, that he would make us sensible of his mercies, and enable us to receive them with thanksgiving.”

“Every thing necessary to the support and comfort of existence, is comprehended in the term, ‘*our daily bread* ;’ as food and raiment, house and land, money and goods; a kind spouse, good children, faithful servants, righteous magistrates, good weather, peace, health, instruction, honor, true friends, good neighbors, and the like.” (1 Tim. iv. 3, 4. Matt. v. 45.)

The arrangement of the Lord’s prayer is in perfect agreement with that precept of its divine author: “Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” (Matt. vi. 33.) The first three petitions allude to the universal establishment of this kingdom, and the salvation of the whole human race. We are next taught to ask for the necessaries and comforts of life—

a. Not because the gift of temporal blessings depends upon our prayers. We have already remarked, that these favors are unconditionally bestowed, and that the evil and the good are alike the objects of the superintending care of the Almighty. But the Christian delights to recognize the love of God in the dispensations of his Providence, no less than in the rich provisions of his gospel. This petition, therefore —

Q. Release the fourth petition. How is this to be understood? What is comprehended in the term “our daily bread?” With what is the arrangement of this prayer in perfect agreement? To what do the first two petitions allude? What are we next taught to ask for? Does the gift of temporal blessings depend upon our prayers? How are they bestowed?

b. *Is the acknowledgment of our dependence.* And we employ it, not to *secure*, nor to *merit* the numberless blessings which we enjoy in common with the rest of mankind ; but simply to express our sense of the goodness of Him “in whom we live, and move, and have our being;” and who mercifully adapts the movements of his Providence to our temporal enjoyment.

c. This petition is strongly expressive of *humble, confiding, filial reliance*. It alludes to all the blessings we need, and embraces the expression of all our temporal wants; but these blessings are not designated, and their distribution is left solely, unconditionally to Him, who is familiar with our necessities, and is able to deal out the gifts of his Providence with unfailing reference to our present and eternal joy. “Give us this day our daily bread.” That is, grant us those favors, and open to us those sources of innocent enjoyment, which will be most conducive to our happiness, as candidates for an immortal existence.

d. This petition, as well as every other, *is to be followed by a corresponding course of action*. Hence, when we pray for “food and raiment, house and land, money and goods ; a kind spouse, good children, faithful servants, righteous magistrates, good weather, peace, health, instruction, honor, true friends, good neighbors, and the like;” there must be, on our part, a diligent application to business as the appointed means of obtaining “every thing necessary to the support and comfort

Q. Of what is this petition the acknowledgment ? Why, or for what purpose, do we employ it ? Of what is the petition also strongly expressive ? To whom and how does it leave the distribution of our temporal blessings ? How may this petition be paraphrased ? By what is this petition to be followed ? Hence, when we pray for food and raiment, houses and land, etc. what course of action must we pursue ?

of existence ;” husband and wife must cherish a spirit of mutual forbearance and affection ; we must be faithful to our children, “bringing them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord ;” we must be kind to our servants ; careful, in the exercise of our rights of suffrage, to appoint men to office who respect and honor the institutions and ordinances of religion ; we must also be attentive to the means of promoting and securing health ; apply to every source of knowledge to which we have access ; be kind to our friends, and gentle and forgiving in our intercourse with all around us. If we *pursue this course of action*, with constant reference to the will and glory of God, we may cheerfully and confidently implore his blessing, for his blessing will doubtless attend it. Let it be remembered however, that we are not to cherish an inordinate desire for wealth, or make a corresponding effort for its acquisition. (1 Tim. vi. 8, 9.) But whilst we aim to secure a competency of the comforts of life, we are to adopt the language of Agur, who prayed : “Give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me ; lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.” (Prov. xxx. 8, 9.)

e. This petition alludes, further, to *the temporal happiness of all men*. “Give us this day our daily bread.” And we are taught to pray, that all who are exposed to penury, sickness, famine, pestilence, and war, may be

Q. If we pursue this course of action, with constant reference to the will and glory of God, what may we cheerfully and confidently implore ? What are we not to cherish ? Whose language are we to adopt when we pray for the necessaries and comforts of life ? Where is this written ? To what else does this petition allude ? What are we taught to pray in regard to others ?

delivered from these and the like afflictions; or sustained and strengthened under them by the grace of God. We are also taught to pray that the rich blessings of divine providence may be profusely scattered among all the nations of the earth; that all may enjoy civil liberty, and freedom of conscience; that the fields may yield their accustomed and necessary increase; that the social relations may be universally productive of contentment and joy; in a word, that the whole human family may have access to all those sources of present good, which we seek for ourselves.

f. In this sense, the petition *also implies a very important duty.* It teaches us that we are to *relieve the wants* of the suffering, and *promote the happiness* of the distressed. And as intemperance and war are the most prolific sources of human wretchedness, Christians are to bring their united exertions to the work of exterminating both from the earth. They are to give themselves no rest until the reign of temperance, love, joy, and peace, is every where established.

Fifth Petition.

“And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.”

“We pray in this petition that our heavenly Father would not regard our sins, nor deny us our requests on account of them; for we merit not one single good thing at his hands; but that, though we may often and greatly offend, and deserve severe chastisement, he would of his free grace pardon us and bestow on us what we desire. We promise, also, on our part, heartily to forgive and

Q. In this sense, what does the petition imply? What does it teach us? Rehearse the fifth petition? How is this to be understood?

willingly to do good to those by whom we have been offended." (Matt. vi. 14, 15. Acts, vii. 60.)

a. As the foregoing petition contains the expression of our dependence, so *this embraces the confession of our guilt.* The confession of sin is required of every sinner; not because his character would otherwise be mistaken, for God has declared that all men "have come short of his glory;" but as a proper manifestation of that conviction of guilt and of those feelings of humility and penitence, which actuate the soul in its pursuit after eternal life. Where these exist, there will be confession. Nor can any one consistently employ the language of this petition, unless he is persuaded of his guilt, and that God alone has the power to pardon him.

b. We pray in this petition, *that temporal blessings may not be withheld from us* on account of our transgressions. That we do not *merit* a single proof of divine love, is a truth, to which our own convictions bear ample testimony. All the blessings therefore, that are secured to our enjoyment, under the regulations of the providence of God; such as life, health, food, raiment, friends, etc., are to be regarded as so many tokens of undeserved affection. Poverty, sickness, war, insult, and disgrace, together with a host of other evils, equally fearful, are the legitimate consequences of sin. And these evils would incessantly afflict

Q. What does this petition embrace *a*? Of whom is the confession of sin required? What has God declared in regard to mankind? If then he knows that all men are sinners without their confessions, for what purpose is confession to be made? What will there be where feelings of humility and penitence exist? Of what must every one be persuaded who employs this petition consistently? For what do we pray in this petition *b*? To what do our own convictions bear ample testimony? How are we therefore to regard all the blessings we enjoy? What are the legitimate consequences of sin?

us, were we not shielded from them by the hand of the Almighty. It is true, that the blessings already mentioned, and many others are supplied to the proud, the self-righteous and the impenitent, as well as to the humble and believing; but it becometh those, who are sensible that these blessings are the free, unmerited gifts of divine benevolence, to make a proper acknowledgment.

c. We pray also in this petition *that our sins may not rob us of eternal life.* "Forgive us our trespasses." That is, shield us from the penalty of thy violated law; for the sake of him who died to appease thy wrath, and to restore to us the smiles of thy reconciled countenance. Whenever we offer this prayer, Christ, the author of human redemption, must be the prominent object of our thoughts. For his atoning death is the meritorious cause of our salvation; and upon this, every well founded hope of eternal happiness is established. (Acts, iv. 12; 1 Tim. i. 15.)

d. The condition annexed. "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Christ has taught us distinctly in this prayer, and also in his own eminent example, (Luke, xxiii. 34) that we are not only to forgive (Matth. xviii. 22) the injuries inflicted upon us, but that we are even to pray to our Heavenly Father in behalf of our bitterest foes. The fruits of the spirit are long-suffering, gentleness, meekness; but if instead of these, we entertain feelings of revenge and hatred, we are morally

Q. What preserves us from being afflicted by these evils? To whom are the blessings enumerated supplied? What should they do who are sensible that these blessings are the free, unmerited gift of divine benevolence? What else do we pray in this petition *c*? How may this petition be paraphrased? Whenever we offer this prayer, who must be the prominent object of our thoughts? What is the meritorious cause of our salvation? What condition is annexed to this petition *d*? What has Christ taught us? What are the fruits of the spirit?

disqualified to receive from God the remission of the punishment due to our sins. We are not to suppose, however, that by exercising forgiveness to our fellow men, we *merit* pardon at the hand of the Creator, The existence of this spirit of forbearance and long-suffering, is only an evidence that we are in a proper frame of mind to implore the pardon of our sins ; and renders it morally right for God to grant us forgiveness in answer to our prayers. Let it be remembered, that we have all sinned against an infinite Being ; and that the wrongs we experience from those around us, however aggravated, are not to be compared with our violations of the divine law. It follows —

e. That if we forgive not our fellow-men, God will certainly deal with us according to our offences. This we learn from the parable of the merciless servant, related in Matth. xviii. 23-35. His Lord, at his own request, cancelled a large debt which stood charged against him ; but, unaffected by this act of clemency, he cast his fellow-servant, who owed him only an hundred pence, into prison. And what course did the master pursue, when he heard of this outrageous transaction ? He caused that servant to be punished as he deserved, and required the payment of the ten thousand talents, which were again placed to his account. “So likewise,” says the Saviour, “shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts

Q. If we entertain feelings of revenge and hatred, for what are we disqualified ? What are we not to suppose, however ? Of what is the existence of the spirit of forbearance and long-suffering an evidence ? Against whom have we all sinned ? With what are the wrongs we experience from others not to be compared ? What follows *e* ? From what do we learn this ? Where is this parable related ? What did his Lord do at his own request ? How did the servant treat his fellow-servant ? What did the master do when he heard of this outrageous transaction ? How does the Saviour explain this parable ?

forgive not every one his brother their trespasses." If, therefore, we address to God the petition, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us," and at the same time cherish an unforgiving spirit in our own hearts; *we pray that our sins*, instead of being cancelled, *may stand registered against us*. With what diligence then should we examine ourselves; and how earnestly should we strive to forgive, even as we hope to be forgiven.

Sixth Petition.

"And lead us not into temptation."

"Properly speaking, God tempts no man to evil; but we pray in this petition, that God would protect and preserve us from the devil, the world, and our own deceitful hearts; and not suffer us to be seduced by them, into unbelief, despair, or any other great and shameful sins; and that though we may be tempted and assaulted by them, we may nevertheless conquer, and finally obtain the victory over them." (James, i. 10-15; 1 Cor. x. 13; Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.)

"Let no man say, when he is tempted, I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man." (James, i. 13.) When, therefore, we pray: "Lead us not into temptation," we desire, simply, that God would shield us from its power, and enable us to resist all its enticements.

a. We pray that we may be preserved from the allurements of the devil. The personality and agency of Satan, are taught in Scripture as distinctly as any other

Q. If we employ this petition, and at the same time cherish an unforgiving spirit, what do we pray? What should we then do? Rehearse the sixth petition. How is this to be understood? What is written in James i. 13? When therefore we use this petition what do we simply desire? From whose allurements do we pray to be delivered *a*? Where are the personality and agency of Satan taught?

truths of divine revelation. We are there told that he was once an angel of light; that he revolted from the Sovereign of the universe, with others, equally exalted in point of spiritual capacity and happiness, and became the head of an empire, which has ever been opposed to the kingdom of God, and his Son Jesus Christ. The Scriptures also assure us, that he seduced our first parents from the path of innocence; and ever since the fatal moment when man first transgressed the law of his Maker, this arch adversary of the soul has been walking about "like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." (1 Peter, v. 8.) We also learn that this agency is exerted at the same time upon different individuals. But, it is not necessary to ascribe to Satan, the attribute of omnipresence, in order to explain this truth; an attribute, which, as a created intelligence, he cannot possess. We know that other spirits partook of the guilt of the devil, and were consequently involved in his fall. These are denominated his angels; and he may delegate them to execute his purposes, whilst the effects of their combined exertions, may, with propriety, be ascribed to him alone, as the *one* who directs their movements, and whom they all implicitly obey.

They who deny the personality of Satan, assert, that the various titles which apply to him in Scripture, are figurative, and allude to the evil principle that dwells in the soul of man. But, to say nothing of many passages of sacred writ which distinctly speak of Satan as a created in-

Q. What are we told in Scripture concerning him? Whom did he seduce from the path of innocence? What has he been doing ever since the fall? Upon whom is his agency exerted at the same time? Is it necessary to suppose that he is omnipresent, in order to explain this truth? How may he execute his purposes without this? What do they who deny the personality of Satan assert?

telligence, (John viii. 44) let us direct our attention, for a moment, to one, which proves this assertion to be, not only fallacious, but impious. We are told, (Matt. iv. 1) that "Jesus was led up of the Spirit, into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil." Was the tempter here spoken of, the principle of evil existing in the pure soul of the spotless Lamb of God! And yet, such is the conclusion to which a denial of the personality of Satan inevitably leads;—a conclusion, from which every pious mind unhesitatingly revolts.

Wicked men may also be said to be the agents of Satan, inasmuch as they often effectually promote his designs, by means of their conduct, their conversation, and their writings. We pray, therefore, in this petition, for protection against the influence of *evil examples*. We pray, that the *revilings* of the sinner may not destroy, or lessen our reverence for the perfections and will of the Almighty. And, finally, we pray, that *the arguments of infidelity* may not weaken our attachment to the truth; but that our faith in the gospel may perpetually strengthen, and our lives conform more and more to its divine principles.

b. The world has its pleasures and allurements; and these win the affections of many away from God, and make them forgetful of moral obligation. Under this head we may class *wealth, honor, and even affection*, together with *all the gratifications of sense*. And we are taught to pray, that our attachment to earthly objects and pursuits, may not be exclusive, but subordinate; that whilst we attend to

Q. What passage of the gospel clearly proves the fallacy of this assertion? What may wicked men be said to be? How do they promote the designs of Satan? What do we pray therefore in this petition? What is the influence of the pleasures and allurements of the world? What may we class under this head?

the duties here allotted us, and partake, with moderation, of the innocent gratifications of life, we may "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," make all our employments subservient to this end, and pledge our best affections to God. We are taught to pray, that we may make *a proper use* of the blessings of providence; and that we may carefully abstain from all pursuits and pleasures, sinful in themselves, and at variance with moral duty.

c. The power of temptation *also exists in our own hearts*, which are *by nature*, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Nor are they ever, in this life, so completely conquered *by grace*, as to render it safe to listen to all their suggestions, and obey all their promptings. The believer is often tempted by those evil inclinations of the soul, which are only half subdued, and which strive continually to re-assert their declining influence. Frequently, when the calls of duty are most distinct and urgent, he finds some apology for its neglect; and yields for a season to his love of ease, or human approbation, or else to the fear of human censure. And, like Peter, who denied his divine Master, he is sometimes betrayed, by the deceitfulness of his heart, into open acts of transgression. We pray, therefore, in this petition, that the divine Spirit may enable us to pursue the way of obedience, and to overcome the inward risings of sin.

d. Individuals are often placed in circumstances of

Q. What are we taught to pray in regard to these? What use are we to make of the blessings of providence? From what are we to abstain? Where else does the power of temptation exist? What is said of our hearts? By what is the believer often tempted? What do these evil inclinations strive continually to do, in his case? Frequently, when the calls of duty are most distinct and urgent, what does he find? To what does he yield? Into what is the believer often betrayed by the deceitfulness of his heart?

trial, that their professions of love to God, and their faith in his promises, may be tested. Thus the Lord led the Israelites, during forty years, in the wilderness, to humble them, and to prove them, and to know what was in their hearts, and whether they would keep his commandments. (Deut. viii. 2.) And we are taught to pray for the sustaining grace of God, that our confidence in his promises may not be shaken; and that our hearts may ever respond to the pious determination of Job, amid all the temptations to which, in the movements of divine providence, we may be exposed: "Till I die I will not remove mine integrity from me." (Job xxvii. 5.)

Seventh Petition.

"But deliver us from evil."

"We pray in this petition, as in a summary, that our heavenly Father would vouchsafe to deliver us from every evil and suffering, whether it affect the soul or the body, property or character; and at last, when the hour of death shall arrive, grant us a happy end, and graciously take us from this world of imperfection and sorrow to himself in heaven." (Gen. xxxix. 9. Ps. xciv. 19. 2 Tim. iv. 18.)

The evils to which we are exposed in life, may be classed, as follows:

a. Temporal. These are, sickness; the loss of property, or reputation; the death, or treachery of friends; poverty, etc.

Q. In what circumstances are individuals often placed? For what purpose? Mention an example. Why were the Israelites detained in the wilderness during forty years? For what are we taught to pray in reference to these circumstances of trial? Why are we to pray for the sustaining grace of God? What was the determination of Job? Rehearse the seventh petition. How is this to be understood? To what two classes of evils are we exposed? Mention some of the first class?

b. Spiritual. These are doubt, care, sorrow, temptation, the fear of divine displeasure, etc.

c. Such experiences are inseparable from life, and many of them are frequently intended as trials of faith, or as chastisements, mercifully inflicted to arrest the soul in its career of guilt, and to inspire it with a sense of duty. Therefore —

d. We are not to suppose that the afflictive visitations of providence, often experienced by individuals in an extraordinary degree, are the evidences of divine wrath; for the recorded sufferings of some of the most devoted servants of God, have been intense beyond a parallel. For proof of this, the reader is referred to the history of Job; and to that of the Saviour himself, who was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.”

e. Nor is it to be expected, that our petitions for deliverance from the trials of life, will, at all times, be answered. The sufferings of Job were protracted; Joseph became an exile from his father’s house, and encountered many trials, before his elevation to offices of honor and responsibility, in the land of Egypt; and the prayer of Jesus, “Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” could not, in the very nature of the case, be granted. It follows, that even this petition must be offered up in the spirit of resignation; for, though clouds of sorrow may lower upon the Christian’s path, the rays of hope and joy will penetrate the surrounding gloom, and beam upon his soul; and he will feel the conviction, that ‘God is love,’ and that

Q. Mention some of the second class, (spiritual.) For what purpose are such experiences frequently intended *c*? What are we therefore not to suppose *d*? Give some examples of the sufferings endured by the most devoted servants of God. What are we not to expect *e*? Mention examples of protracted suffering? What follows?

even the chastisements of his hand, are the proofs of his unwavering affection.

Conclusion.

“For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.”

“The word amen, signifies the assurance, that such petitions are acceptable to my Father in heaven, and heard of him; for he himself has commanded us thus to pray, and has promised to hear our supplications. Amen, amen, signifies yea, yea, it shall be so.”

a. Thine is the kingdom. This is the acknowledgment of God’s universal empire; and that he alone, as the creator and upholder of all things, has a claim to our worship. It is also the ascription of praise, and may be thus paraphrased: “We adore thee, as that infinite being, who rules among the armies of heaven, and among the nations of the earth; the regulations of thy government, are destined to accomplish all the wise and glorious determinations of thy will.” It is the avowal of the Christian’s allegiance to his Maker. “Thou hast a right to govern, and thy dominion shall be established in my heart.” It attributes to the Almighty, the control of all events. He brings the purposes of the wicked to naught, or else directs them to the fulfilment of those great designs of his moral administration; the advancement of his own glory, and the happiness of all the faithful subjects of his empire.

b. Thine is the power. This is also the language of adoration. Again: it is an argument, which the believer

Q. What may be said of the chastisements of God? Repeat the conclusion of the Lord’s prayer. What signifies the word Amen? *Thine is the kingdom*—of what is this the acknowledgment? How else may it be regarded? How may it be paraphrased? Of what is it the avowal? What does it attribute to the Almighty? What does he do in regard to the purposes of the wicked? *Thine is the power*—of what is this the language?

employs to secure an answer to his prayers. "Thou art able to grant me every blessing I need." It is also the expression of filial confidence: "I have none in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth whom I desire beside thee; for thou, and thou alone, art *mighty to save*."

c. Thine is the glory. The goodness, power, condescension, wisdom and forbearance of God, are manifested in all the gifts, and merciful regulations of his providence; and also in the arrangements of his grace, which secure to the believer, the hope, and the promise of eternal life. Therefore, the glory of our present happiness and future joy, belongs to the Creator.

d. For ever and ever. These ascriptions of praise are addressed to the Almighty, not only by the saints on earth, but by all the redeemed in heaven, and by the angels who surround his everlasting throne; and throughout eternal ages, (forever and ever) all holy beings will swell, and prolong the chorus of their gratitude, to Him who is the fountain of all their joys.

e. Amen, when employed at the close of a prayer, expresses a strong desire that our petitions may be heard and answered; and that "every good, and every perfect gift" may be freely granted us.

Q. For what purpose does the believer employ it as an argument? Of what is it also the expression? *Thine is the glory*—why does the glory of our present happiness and future joy belong to the Creator? *Forever and ever*—what are we to understand by this? What does Amen signify when employed at the close of a prayer?

PART FOURTH.

OF THE SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM.

“Baptism is not mere water; but it is that water which the ordinance of God enjoins, and which is connected with God’s word.”

“It is enjoined in that command which our Lord Jesus Christ gave to his disciples: (Matth. xxviii. 19.) “Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

“It causes the forgiveness of sin, redeems from death and the devil, and gives everlasting salvation to those that believe; as the word and promise of God declare.” (Gal. iii. 26, 27.)

The words and promises of God are “those, in which our Lord declares, (Mark, xvi. 16.) “He, that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”

“It is not the water that produces these effects, but the word of God, which is connected with the water, and our faith confiding in this word of God in the use of baptismal water. For, without the word of God, the water is mere water, and no baptism; but, with the word of God, it is a baptism, that is, a merciful water of life, and a laver of regeneration in the Holy Ghost: as St. Paul says to Titus, (iii. 5, 6.) “According to his mercy hath he saved us by the

Q. Of what does the fourth part of the Catechism treat? What is baptism? What is that commandment of God which enjoins it? What are the benefits of Baptism? Which are these words and promises of God? How can water produce such great effects?

working of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he hath shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;" that thereby we might be made righteous, and be heirs according to the hope of everlasting life." (1 Peter, iii. 21.)

Water baptism "signifies, that the old Adam, with all sinful lusts and affections, should be drowned and destroyed by daily sorrow and repentance; and that a new man should daily arise, that shall dwell in the presence of God in righteousness and purity forever. (Col. iii. 3.)"

"St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, (vi. 4.) says: "We are buried with Christ, by baptism, into his death; that, like as he was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

Two sacraments were instituted by Christ; the one, namely, the last supper, just previous to his death; the other, baptism, after his resurrection. It was then he gave the express command to his apostles: "Go ye, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" although the rite was administered in his own case, by John the baptist, about the time he entered on the work of his ministry, from which we may indeed, date its institution; for it is certain, that the disciples of Jesus, during the early period of his ministry, performed this rite under the direction of their divine master. (John, iv. 2.) These ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's supper) are called *sacraments*, because they are

Q. What does such water-baptism signify? Where is this said in the Scriptures? How many sacraments were instituted by Christ? Name them. When did he give the command to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and teach all the nations, baptizing," etc.? By whom was the rite administered in his own case?

among the established means of grace, and because the richest spiritual blessings descend upon those, who observe them conscientiously, and in the spirit of faith and prayer.

Baptism,

May be considered, in reference to 1. its nature ; 2. its subjects ; 3. the advantages which it confers ; and, 4. the obligations imposed in its administration.

I. *Nature of Baptism.*

a. It is a divinely instituted ordinance. It has been appointed and sanctioned by the same authority, which has proclaimed to man every other doctrine and obligation of Christianity. Hence, every one who believes the gospel to be a divine revelation, acts a very inconsistent part, and treats with contempt a positive injunction of the Messiah, as long as he refuses to comply with that direction of Peter to the assembly which he addressed on the day of pentecost, "Be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts, ii. 38.) The very command, "baptize all nations," implies *a duty*, to be performed by every individual to whom the gospel is proclaimed ; just as the command to preach repentance and faith, implies that it is the duty of all men to repent and believe.

b. Baptism is also an initiatory rite. It was instituted as the means, and the only means, of receiving persons into communion with the visible church. And they who neglect this ordinance, debar themselves from all the privileges of church-fellowship. They can have no voice in the ap-

Q. Why are baptism and the Lord's supper called sacraments ? How may baptism be considered ? What may be said of the nature of baptism *a* ? Hence, what follows ? What does the command, "baptize all nations," imply ? By whom is this duty to be performed ? What else may be said of the nature of baptism *b* ? For what purpose was it instituted ? From what do they who neglect this ordinance debar themselves ?

pointment of officers to preside over its interests. They are deprived of that care which the church is required to exercise over its members. They cannot approach the altar, and commemorate the dying love of Christ, in the way of his appointment.

Baptism, it is true, is not absolutely essential to salvation; for many infant souls are taken from the world, before they have been received, by means of this ordinance, within the pale of the visible church; and there may be circumstances, in the case of adults, which necessarily prevent the administration of the rite. Whether the duty can be neglected with safety, by professed believers, when they enjoy the opportunity of its performance, is a question, which cannot be answered in the affirmative. Under these circumstances, its neglect must be classed with every other neglect of revealed obligation; it is therefore sinful, and must meet the divine displeasure.

c. Baptism is *emblematic* of that moral purification, which is effected in the soul of the believer, by means of the truths of inspiration; together with the accompanying influences of the Holy Ghost. It is, therefore, a matter of no consequence, whether the quantity of water employed in the administration of the ordinance, be more or less; or whether the rite be performed by sprinkling or immersion. In the utter absence of all Scriptural testimony, in favor of the latter mode, to the exclusion of the former; it is left for every one to choose between the two, as circumstances, or conscience may dictate. In the case of infants, and the

Q. Of what are they deprived? How do you prove that baptism is not essential to salvation? Who are without excuse for neglecting this duty? Of what is baptism emblematic? What is therefore a matter of no consequence? In the utter absence of all scriptural testimony in favor of one mode of administration, to the exclusion of the other, what is left for every individual?

sick, sprinkling is evidently to be preferred ; and in every other case, inasmuch as the rite is only symbolical, and as its administration, to be availing, must be accompanied by repentance and faith, the quantity of water employed, can be of no conceivable importance. Therefore it may be inferred, that, in as far as the mere symbol is concerned, sprinkling answers fully the end of the institution.

2. *Subjects of Baptism.*

a. In the case of adults, we are distinctly informed who are the proper subjects of baptism, by the Redeemer himself. (Mark, xvi. 16.) “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” It is evident, from the last clause of this passage : “he that *believeth not*, shall be damned,” that it was the object of Christ, not to represent baptism as being essential to salvation, but to declare the necessity of *faith*, in order to secure the benefits of the ordinance. “The baptism which saves us, is not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.” (1 Peter, iii. 21.) And it is required of those, who have not been baptized during infancy, and wish to be admitted, by means of this ordinance, into communion with the visible church, to believe in the divine authority of the religion of Christ, and to accede to its terms of reconciliation with the Father, (repentance, faith, and obedience;) otherwise, the administration of the rite is a mere nullity, and of no avail.

b. Pædo-baptism is universally practiced in the Lutheran

Q. Which mode is preferable in the case of infants and the sick? By what must the administration of the rite be accompanied, to be availing? Who must exercise this faith, in the case of infants? **A.** The parents. When do they become responsible for its exercise? **A.** When they arrive at years of discretion. Who among adults are the proper subjects of baptism? How are such to secure the benefits of the ordinance? What is the baptism which saves us? What may be said of infant baptism?

church; nor is there any question among its members, in regard to the propriety and validity of the ordinance, as administered to infants. A simple statement of the arguments generally advanced in favor of this custom, will be given hereafter; and the obligations, that devolve upon every Christian parent, whose children are consecrated to God, by means of this solemn rite, will be detailed.

3. *Advantages of Baptism.*

These may be thus briefly enumerated.

a. The subjects of this ordinance *enter into a covenant with God*; and if they comply with the conditions of this covenant, on their part, they have the assurance that the Almighty will grant them every spiritual blessing. That is, if they truly repent of their sins, and exercise faith in the atoning merits of the Lamb, and “continue instant in prayer;” their sins will be fully pardoned, and they will enjoy the protecting influences of the divine spirit, and be enabled “to persevere, even unto the end.”

b. *It is a strong incentive to piety.* They who have thus entered into a covenant with the Creator, are sensible that they stand in a new relation to Him, and their fellow men. They have assumed obligations, and acknowledged responsibilities, the most sacred and binding. They are pledged, by their voluntary promises, to pursue a course of action to which they have been, hitherto, strangers. And they are surrounded by a cloud of witnesses, in heaven, and on earth, and in hell; all of whom, though influenced by opposite feelings, watch with intense interest, the result

Q. *Advantages of baptism.* Into what do the subjects of this ordinance enter? If they comply with the conditions of the covenant on their part, what assurance have they? To what is this ordinance a strong incentive? Of what are they sensible who have thus entered into a covenant with the Creator? What have they assumed and acknowledged? To what are they pledged? By whom are they surrounded?

of this new movement on the part of the sinner. These considerations, tend to animate the soul in its heaven-ward progress; and inspire it with a degree of ardor, which would be unfelt, were it not for these and the like exciting causes. Before the sinner enters into this covenant relation with his Maker, his conduct has but little *comparative* influence in enticing others into the mazes of sin; but after this relation is established, his example must be instrumental in effecting a vast amount of good or evil; he is either a *light*, to guide others to happiness, or a *stumbling block*, in the way of their everlasting enjoyment.

c. Christians "are bound to endeavor to restore such of their number, as are overtaken in a fault, in the spirit of meekness; to admonish and warn open offenders; and, if necessary, to reprove them with the utmost seriousness, with a view to recover them from the error of their ways." (Liturgy, p. 87.) The subjects of baptism, therefore, enjoy the benefits of that spiritual supervision, which is exercised in every congregation, where there exists a well regulated, and wisely administered discipline.

d. *Children*, baptized during infancy, and whose parents are actuated by a sense of their weighty obligations, enjoy the benefits of religious instruction; and they are thus (often savingly) enlightened, as regards their own duty to God and their fellow-men. It should form a part of this instruction, to acquaint the child with the nature of that covenant, into which his parents have entered, in his behalf. The language of the believing parent should be, "my child, you have been dedicated to God, in baptism;

Q. What tendency do these considerations exert? What is the example of the professed believer destined to effect? What are Christians bound to do in their intercourse with each other c? What, therefore, do the subjects of baptism enjoy? What benefits do children derive from this ordinance d? What should form a part of this instruction?

to that God whom you are bound to love and serve, as your creator, preserver, benefactor and redeemer; and by this act you have been united to his visible kingdom." When the child understands fully, by means of a course of teaching adapted to his mental powers, the nature of the baptismal covenant, and the reasonableness of the obligations which it involves, the very knowledge of the relation which he sustains to the church, and to its supreme Head, must exert a happy tendency upon the mind and heart. And thus, the offspring of Christian parents, who, in their infancy have been united to the church, are gradually prepared to "confirm and ratify the solemn promises, made at their baptism, renewing and assuming the same for themselves."

4. *Obligations imposed in the administration of the ordinance.*

a. These are acknowledged and assumed in the very promises of the adult subject. He resolves "to renounce all sinful desires and works, and, by the help of God, to adorn his profession by a holy life and conversation." He is to advance in spiritual knowledge; to die daily unto sin; and to exercise a living, practical faith in the Son of God. So that it may be said of him: "Thou art washed, thou art sanctified, thou art justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God."

b. *Responsibilities of parents.* These will be detailed, after a brief statement of the arguments usually advanced in support of

Q. In what way does this instruction benefit the child? For what are the offspring of Christian parents gradually prepared? *Obligations imposed.* What does the adult subject of baptism promise to renounce? In what is he to advance? Unto what is he to die daily? What is he to exercise? For what purpose?

Infant Baptism.

These arguments may be reduced to the following :

a. The general command : “ Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” embraces all mankind, without any reference to age.

b. Particular directions in regard to infant baptism, were not given by Christ, or his apostles, because it was already a practice among the Jews to receive infants into the church ; and, therefore, these directions would have been superfluous.

c. Christ himself has taught us, that little children possess every moral qualification for this rite, and that none are better prepared to join the assembly of the saints. His language is : “ Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not ; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.” (Mark x. 14, 15.) Here the Saviour declares that infant souls are prepared to enter heaven, and acknowledges little children as members of his visible church.

d. The *old* dispensation was a type of the *new*, and as the Lord's Supper was instituted in room of the Passover, it may be safely inferred that baptism was intended to take the place of circumcision, and, like that initiatory rite, was to be administered to infants as well as adults.

e. We read, in the gospel, of whole families, who were baptized, and though we have no *positive* testimony that

Q. What command did the Saviour give to his apostles *a* ? Whom does this command embrace ? Why were particular directions in regard to infant baptism not given *b* ? What has Christ himself taught us *c* ? What does the Saviour here declare ? Of what was the old dispensation a type ? In room of what was the Lord's supper instituted ? In room of what may we infer that baptism was instituted ?

these families embraced juvenile members, it is *highly probable* that such was the case.

f. It was customary to baptize infants in the ancient Christian church. The testimony of Origen, on this point, is decisive. Origen was the most eminent among the early fathers, and lived during the early part of the third century. He mentions, that the custom of baptizing infants was founded on apostolic tradition. He was, himself, the son of Christian parents, and this rite was doubtless administered in his own case, during the period of his infancy.

From these considerations, it is evident that the custom of infant baptism has been very properly retained in the church. It is now practised by most evangelical denominations; though *the obligations imposed upon parents*, by the administration of the rite, appear to be, by many, very imperfectly understood; or at least, very little regarded. We shall make no apology, therefore, for glancing at these obligations in this connection, although the subject of parental duty, has been already touched upon, elsewhere.

1. Here, let it be remembered, that *parents* are the proper persons to dedicate their children to God, by means of this solemn ordinance. *They* have been entrusted by the Creator, with the guardianship of their own offspring, and they are the individuals who ought to assume the obligations, involved in the act of presenting a child, as an offering to the Almighty. These remarks lead us to advert,

Q. What do we read in the gospel of whole families? What was customary in the ancient Christian church? What is the testimony of Origen? From these considerations what is evident? By whom is infant baptism now practised? What appears to be very imperfectly understood, or at least, very little regarded? Who are the proper persons to dedicate children to God by means of this solemn rite? With what have they been entrusted?

2. To the custom (which has hitherto prevailed to an unfortunate extent) of providing *sponsors*; who become the representatives of the parents, and assume, in the very promises they make, the whole weight of parental responsibility. Now this custom is, in most cases, evidently wrong, and worse than useless, because, during the life of the parents, the child is more or less influenced by parental precept and example; and the sponsors, even if they are sensible of the sacred relation which they sustain to the child, are unable, adequately, to perform the duties which that relation embraces. There are very few circumstances, indeed, which justify the adoption of this long-prevailing practice; and these circumstances must be very peculiar. If, for instance, an only surviving parent were about to leave the world, that parent might entrust the religious training of a beloved child to some pious friend: the relation of sponsor would, in this case, be established on a proper basis. But, in general, the practice ought to be abandoned.

Besides, these sponsors are frequently young, thoughtless, and utterly ignorant of the nature of the relation into which they enter. They do not know that they are the representatives of the parents, and that they are bound by the very act of 'standing up with the child,' (as it is usually termed) to exercise a watchful care over all his actions, and to influence and control his principles by their precepts and example. The moment the solemn rite has been performed, they dismiss the subject from their minds; and perhaps never think of the spiritual welfare of the child, whose guardianship they have injudiciously assumed.

Q. What custom has prevailed to an unfortunate extent? What do sponsors become? What do they assume in the very promises they make? Why is this custom, in most cases, wrong, and worse than useless? What circumstances would justify this practice?

3. A very strange misapprehension also prevails, in the minds of many parents, in reference to baptism itself. They regard this rite as being necessarily invested with a saving efficacy; and they consider its performance, essential to the eternal happiness of their children. This opinion is by no means general in the Lutheran church; there are, comparatively, but few who entertain it; but did it prevail only in a single congregation, or in an individual mind, *its very existence* would call for animadversion. Waddington, in his history of the church, thus alludes to the origin of the sentiment. "A great proportion of those baptized in the first ages were, of course, adults, and since the church was then scrupulous to admit none among its members, excepting those whose sincere repentance gave promise of a holy life, the administration of that sacrament was in some sense accompanied by the remission, not only of the sin from Adam, but of all sin that had been previously committed by the proselyte—that is to say, *such absolution was given to the repentance necessary for admission into Christ's church.* In after ages, by an error common in the growth of superstition, the efficacy inherent in the *repentance* was attributed to *the ceremony.*" Infant baptism can be availing therefore, only in as far as parents exercise faith in the promises of God, (Acts, ii. 39) and fulfill their solemn vows made at the altar, which bind them to educate their children in the precepts and doctrines of revealed truth.

The erroneous opinion, that the baptism of a child is inseparably connected with its salvation, gives rise to two evils.

Q. What misapprehension prevails in the minds of many parents? How may the origin of this sentiment be accounted for? To what evils does this opinion give rise?

1. If the child is taken from the world before this solemn rite is performed, the parent deeply laments the circumstance, under the false impression that the child is lost forever.

2. Those who believe that the salvation of their offspring depends solely on the mere performance of this rite, are too apt to neglect that instruction, which, implanted in the youthful mind, serves to train up the soul for heaven. The child has been baptized, and that is enough. The mind unimpressed with holy thought, and unenriched with pure religious feeling, becomes the home of every evil conception; and the neglected soul of that immortal being is perhaps lost in consequence of a carelessness, that has originated in the misunderstanding of a simple doctrine of the word of God.

It follows that parents who offer their children in baptism, are most solemnly pledged to educate them "carefully in the gospel of our Lord Jesus, and teach them to walk according to its holy commandments." (Liturgy, p. 60.) The following considerations are addressed to parents who acknowledge this obligation. And the only apology for this length, must be the fact, that the fondest hopes of the church are centred in the faithful discharge of parental duty; whilst it is inseparably associated with the usefulness and happiness of each succeeding generation. And here we remark —

4. That it is highly essential for Christian parents, whose children are united, by baptism, to the visible church, to commence this course of religious instruction, *at a very early age*. Every child is soon old enough to comprehend some of the most important doctrines of the religion of the

Q. At what time are parents to commence a course of religious instruction?

Bible. As soon as his mental powers are sufficiently developed to admire the beauty of a flower, or the song of a bird, he is old enough to be told who has furnished these sources of delight to man. As soon as he can lisp, he is old enough to lisp the name of his Creator, and to cherish some idea, though faint and indistinct, of his goodness and power. Parents often find it difficult to restrain the waywardness of their offspring, and to subdue their passions, even at the early age of three or four years ; but I venture to say, that nine times out of ten, this unfortunate circumstance grows out of their own neglect. They do not watch with sufficient carefulness, those developments of mind which begin at a very early period of life ; and supposing their children to be too young to reap any benefit from instruction, before they are four or five years old, they neglect laying the foundation of religious principle, at the very time when the heart is most susceptible of impression.

There is a process of education going on in the minds of all children, as soon as they begin to notice objects around them, and distinguish one from another. They are taught by observation. They watch the feelings of their parents, their manifestations of anger ; and many circumstances that would be unnoticed by maturer minds, often produce an abiding impression on the characters of these little ones, whose powers of discrimination between good and evil, are often more active than we are apt to suppose. At length

Q. What is every child soon old enough to understand ? To what may we frequently trace the circumstance, that parents often find it difficult to restrain the waywardness of their offspring, even at the early age of three or four years ? What do they not watch with sufficient carefulness ? What is there going on in the minds of all children, as soon as they are old enough to notice objects around them ? How are they taught ? What do they watch ? What is the result of this ?

the parent discovers the evil disposition of his child. The conviction comes upon him like a flash. The child is stubborn, intractable, and spiteful ; and the parent wonders how this disposition has been so suddenly created, when in fact it has been gradually, though imperceptibly formed, by the influence of existing circumstances. In this case, the child has been left to himself, and his young, uncultivated mind, in its neglected state, has grown full of rank desires and passions ; or rather, the desires and passions, that belong to human nature, have taken deep root in its rich soil. Hence the importance of impressing the mind with religious sentiments and feelings at a very early period of life. Religious truths, thus early sown, may be compared with the acorn, planted among thorns and weeds. It springs out of the ground, and for a time seems to struggle for the mastery with the vile things that grow around it. But it soon rises above them, and attains strength and majesty, until it becomes a lofty tree with wide spreading branches ; and then though thorns and weeds still spring up beneath it, they soon die and wither in its shade. Implant religious principles into the warm, susceptible heart of the child, and they will in most, if not all cases, eventually gain the ascendancy over its sinful longings and base passions. Neglect this education, until the existence of an evil, stubborn, wayward nature is strongly demonstrated ; and you will find it difficult, if not impossible, to quell, or influence their sinful desires. Persons often wonder, when they see the child of pious parents, prodigal and infamous in after life. But the question here arises, have not these parents, in some instances, neglected the religious education of their offspring *too long*, until they could not lead them in the paths of virtue, in consequence of the triumphant influence which sin was suffered to gain over their hearts. There was Newton,

an eminent example of piety. He never forgot the teachings of a fond mother, though deprived of her tender care and watchful supervision at an early age, and soon thrown amid scenes where he became the basest of the base. The lessons of his childhood, dwelt upon his memory like guardian angels, to save him from ruin. Their soft whispers were heard above the noise and revelry of dissipation; and though the struggle was long, and arduous, and sometimes doubtful, they finally triumphed, and Newton became a brilliant light in the world, and an able advocate of those principles of truth, which had been implanted in his young mind. How evident it is, that every parent has something more to do, than merely to see that the external rite of baptism is administered to his child! How evident, that the ordinance itself is useless, unless its subject is brought under the influence of a course of instruction, that will pave the way for the acquisition of eternal happiness.

Let us, for a moment, view this subject in another light. *The work of every parent is intimately connected with that of every minister of the gospel.* Here is a world to be evangelized and saved. And of whom is this world composed? It is composed, in part, Christian parents, of your children, and they will soon stand in your places. Every father and mother are at the head of a small band of immortal spirits, waiting to be conducted to happiness; their characters to be moulded, and all their feelings to be controlled by those who guide them. And, O, it is agony to reflect, that this sacred trust is often violated, and that these undying souls are frequently deceived and ruined by those who ought to protect them. And yet such, it is to be feared, is the case, even among those from whom we are authorised to expect better things. Ministerial exertion may counteract, in part, the sad effects of parental

negligence. Sunday school, Bible class, and catechetical instruction, may compensate, in a measure, for the want of religious culture at home. But are not these efforts deprived of more than half their efficacy; are they not often entirely frustrated, because the child, who has access to these means of grace, receives no encouragement from his parents, to persevere in his search after eternal life? When the minister of the gospel administers the rite of baptism to the child of Christian parents, he confidently entrusts to these parents the spiritual training of that child, and looks forward, with hope, to the day when, having enjoyed for years the advantage of their pious counsels and prayers, he will be prepared to confirm and ratify their solemn vows, and assume them for himself. What a different aspect would the church present, were not this hope so often disappointed!

Preparatory Instruction.

If it is the duty of parents to train up their children for usefulness in life, and for everlasting bliss in heaven, it is equally the duty of *the young*, to profit by all the means of grace within their reach. Among these means, as they exist in the Lutheran church, catechetical instruction holds a conspicuous place. Consisting of a familiar explanation and close application of the doctrines and precepts of the word of God, it cannot fail, if the investigation, to which it leads the mind of the catechumen, is prayerfully conducted, of producing a happy impression on the heart. Though this course of instruction is preparatory to confirmation, the latter does not necessarily follow it; as those members of the class alone, are expected to confirm the promises made

Q. What is the duty of the young? Among these means, as they exist in the Lutheran church, what holds a conspicuous place?

at their baptism, who feel constrained, by a sense of duty, to devote themselves to the service of God.

Confirmation

Is nothing else than the act of admitting adult believers to all the privileges of church membership, after a public profession of faith, and therefore, as the same custom prevails, essentially, among all Christian denominations, no argument need be advanced in its defence.* The following remarks, are addressed particularly to catechumens, and are intended to aid them in the decision of the question, whether they are prepared to consecrate their services to the Almighty, as well as to urge the performance of this important duty.

1. *You have attained the age of accountability*, and it is now for you to decide, whether the fond hopes, cherished at your baptism, are to be realized, and whether the religious advantages you have enjoyed in childhood and youth, have exerted a saving influence on your immortal souls. Although you are already united to the visible church, in virtue of the act performed, by your parents, in your behalf. (baptism being the only initiatory rite ever appointed) yet, remember, that the efficacy of this act depends, not merely on the discharge of parental duty, but chiefly on the compliance of the subject himself, with the revealed conditions of salvation. If the pious lessons inculcated on your minds, are unheeded, and if you are inattentive to the convictions of duty, you voluntarily debar yourselves from all the privileges of communion with

* This subject is fully discussed in the work entitled *Popular Theology*, to which the reader is referred. "The Catechumens and Communicants Companion," which has been extensively circulated in our congregations, also recommends itself to every Lutheran, and especially to the young, as a work peculiarly adapted to excite and foster a spirit of devotion.

the church on earth, and from all the happiness of the redeemed in heaven. Though dedicated to God in infancy, you refuse to sanction that act of dedication, and separate yourselves from all intercourse with the household of faith.

2. *You have enjoyed peculiar advantages.* You have listened to the doctrines of Christianity, and the statements of moral duty. You are familiar with all the claims of God on your obedience and love. You are aware of the excellence and the purity of the divine law. You know that you have broken that law, and incurred its everlasting penalty. You have studied the system of redemption, and you have witnessed, through the medium of revelation, the expiring agonies of that Saviour who was wounded for your transgressions.

3. *You have heard direct calls from the Holy Spirit.* All the invitations of the gospel are to be regarded in this light. The Bible is the sword of the spirit; and this weapon has been employed to destroy your love of sin, to arrest you in your career of rebellion against God, and to make you the willing subjects of the Prince of Peace. In listening to the appeals of the Bible, therefore, you have listened to the appeals of the Spirit, and, it is for you to decide, whether you are determined to resist these appeals, emanating from this exalted source.

4. *You have no excuse for the neglect of religious obligation.* Are you too young to separate yourselves from the guilty pleasures and pursuits of life: you may never be old. Are you encouraged to defer the performance of duty, by the hope, that it will be easier, at some future time, to throw off the shackles of sin: vain hope! cherished, only to deceive! And whilst you throw in one scale, these frivolous apologies, the claims of God are thrown in the

other, and bear down the balance against you, with their tremendous, overpowering weight. That God, whom, perchance, you refuse to serve, is your Maker, your Preserver, and the Redeemer of your souls; nor have you any right, when he says: "My son, give me thy heart," to deny even for a single moment, this tribute of the gratitude and the love you ought to feel.

5. *Your own eternal interests urge you* to confirm the promises made at your baptism in your behalf, and to assume them for yourselves. Though no act of yours can *merit* the gift of eternal life, yet the bestowment of this gift depends on your compliance with the terms of salvation, stated in the gospel, and rendered necessary by the very constitution of man as a free moral agent. If you are "seriously resolved to love the Lord your God with all the heart, and to love your fellow-men as yourselves; if you strive to grow in piety and virtue, to live as the disciples of that Redeemer who was holy and undefiled, and to imitate his encouraging and unspotted example," and if you centre all your hopes of forgiveness and happiness in the Lamb that was slain, and if, under the influence of such feelings and sentiments you approach the altar, and there assume the obligations of the Christian profession, the solemn act will be pleasing to God, and conducive to your everlasting enjoyment.

6. *You are also prompted to the discharge of this duty, by your own convictions.* The arguments, warnings, reproofs, and invitations of the divine word, cannot have failed to awaken within you, a sense of moral obligation. The requirements of the moral law are recommended to your consciences by their own reasonableness, and by the delightful tendency of their practical operation. You observe that the Christian, who loves God and man,

and thus fulfils the whole law, enjoys 'that peace which passeth all understanding,' and makes every one, in a degree, happy around him. And you know that you have sinned, and that you deserve to be punished; and you know too that it would have been an act of justice had this punishment been inflicted on the whole human race, and had the hope of pardon been forever excluded from the soul. These and the like considerations, must carry the *conviction* of duty to every mind that gives them the attention they deserve, and if they do not lead to its *performance*, it must be because the voice of conscience is uttered in vain.

But perhaps you have resolved to cast yourselves, with all your guilt, into the extended arms of your compassionate Redeemer, and perhaps you have determined that, sustained by divine grace, you will endeavor to obey his precepts, and imitate his bright example. Cherish that resolution. Cherish it by means of prayer. Bow down before the Giver of all good, and plead for strength, that you may be enabled to execute a purpose, so consistent with your own happiness; a purpose suggested by the Spirit of God. Remember, that the *performance* of duty, ought always to follow its *conviction*. Are you persuaded of your need of a Saviour; then flee to the refuge set before you in the gospel. Are you sensible of a degree of moral weakness and guilt, which destroys every feeling of self-righteousness and self-dependence; pray for pardon, and for moral energy adequate to the great purpose of making your calling and election sure. Have you discovered the excellency, the beauty and the fitness of the divine law; in humble dependence on Him, who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," put forth every effort, of which you are capable, to obey that law. Go to the sanctuary; ap-

proach the altar ; publicly announce your determination to engage in the service of your mighty Deliverer ; ratify, by your own voluntary act, the baptismal promises made by your parents, and assume all the obligations which those promises involve. Be not satisfied with the *conviction* of duty ; be satisfied with nothing less than its performance. "It is impossible too often to inculcate the momentous truth, that the character is not formed by passive impressions, but by voluntary actions, and that we shall be judged hereafter, not by what we have felt, but by what we have done."*

These reflections are addressed particularly to those who, having passed through a regular course of preparatory instruction, are called upon to announce their preference, either for the duties of piety, or the gratifications of sin. Individuals, placed in these circumstances, have arrived, perhaps, at the most important period of life. That moment of decision, when the pastor, after a long and prayerful effort to impress divine truth on the minds of his catechumens, proposes the testing inquiry, "who is on the Lord's side ?" is a moment fraught with consequences of deep and weighty interest to the soul. An eternal destiny of happiness or woe may be involved in the resolution then deliberately formed. No opportunity may again be presented, so favorable to a separation from the world, so propitious to a union with Christ. And should not the line of separation between the empire of Satan and that of God be passed over then, it may never again be so nearly approached.

Questions like the following, may serve to strengthen the convictions of duty, and conduct the mind to the determination of its immediate performance.

* Robert Hall.

1. Am I interested in the great salvation? Have I a heart, "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked?" And if so, am I not influenced by the promptings of sin, or the devices of Satan, as long as I refuse to apply to the Lamb of God for pardon and peace?

2. The Almighty sustains to me the threefold relation of creator, benefactor and redeemer. I am indebted to him for all the faculties of mind, for all the blessings of life, and for all the overtures of the gospel; and do I not act an *ungrateful* part, as long as I refuse to pledge to him my services and love?

3. Have I any excuse for the neglect of duty?

4. Have the hopes of happiness, which I have so long indulged, ever been realized in the pursuits and pleasures of sin?

5. Am I not, indeed, convinced, that religion's ways alone are ways of pleasantness, and that her paths are paths of peace?

6. Is not the present, the proper moment of decision, in favor of self-consecration to God?

Self-examination, if conducted in a spirit of humility and prayer, will contribute in a great degree to that state of feeling which is essential to the discharge of duty. And the catechumen should have frequent recourse to it; not only when he is about to decide the final question, but in all his investigations of revealed truth at home, and whenever he attends the stated lectures of his pastor, he should make it a point to discover whether his mind is in a proper frame to be suitably impressed by the solemn disclosures of the word of God. He should guard especially against carelessness and inattention, for where these exist, no beneficial results can be expected to ensue.

It is also highly important, for those who have resolved

to make a public profession of faith, to entertain correct views of a step which many take without consideration. Many have united with the church after committing to memory the words of the Catechism, without any evidence of a change of heart, and without being aware of the high responsibilities that devolve upon every professed believer. It may be said that it is far better to gather the young into the fold of the great Shepherd, even under these circumstances, than to suffer them to stray in the world without that supervision which the church is bound to exercise over all its members. It may, perhaps, be difficult to deny this assertion. Still it is evident, that the interests of the church would be more speedily advanced, and more permanently established, were all its members, *actuated by a sense of duty*, at the moment they enter into its communion; and it is equally evident that this desirable end ought to be an important object of ministerial effort.

Let any one therefore, who is about to pledge his services to God, examine well the motives that prompt to this determination. Let every one pause, even when on the verge of decision, and propose such inquiries as these to his own heart.

1. Am I influenced in this decision by custom, or the advice of friends; or by a profound sense of duty?

2. Have I faithfully improved the advantages of instruction which I have so eminently enjoyed? And have I diligently sought for the enlightening influences of the Holy Spirit, by means of prayer?

3. Do I entertain worthy conceptions of the divine character? Do I reverence the divine perfections? Do I acknowledge the right of the Creator to impose his law upon me, as a subject of his moral government; and do I respect and love that law, and sincerely desire to obey it?

4. Do I feel that I have transgressed the law of God? Am I sensible that no act of mine can remove the penalty of sin? Is the Redeemer precious to my soul, and have I centred every hope of happiness in the efficacy of his atoning death?

5. Do I desire to promote the spiritual welfare of all mankind? Am I properly affected by those scenes of spiritual ignorance and moral desolation, that exist around me, and prevail to such an alarming extent throughout the heathen world? And whilst I work out my own salvation with fear and trembling, will it be my effort to aid in extending the knowledge of the Lord over the whole earth?

These, and similar questions, will enable us to decide whether love to God and man is the principle that pervades our hearts, and whether all our expectations of happiness, in the eternal world, rest upon Christ; in a word, whether we are actuated by worthy motives in embracing the religion of the gospel. We are commanded by the Saviour himself to "count the cost" before we pledge ourselves to promote the interests of his cause; nor should we assume the responsibilities which this solemn pledge implies, before we are persuaded in our own minds, that we have been led to this choice by the spirit of truth, and that we are willing, at any and every sacrifice, to wear out in the service of our divine master.

PART FIFTH.

THE SACRAMENT OF THE ALTAR ;
OR, THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The sacrament of the altar "is the body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, under the external signs of bread and wine, given unto Christians to eat and drink, as it was instituted by Christ himself. (1 Cor. x. 16, 17.)"

"The holy evangelists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, together with the holy apostle St. Paul, write thus: "Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it and gave it unto his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me. Likewise, he took the cup, gave thanks and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; this cup is the new Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. Do this, as often as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." (Matth. xxvi. 26-28; Mark, xiv. 22-24; Luke, xxii. 14-20; 1 Cor. xi. 23-26; Gal. iii. 15.)

"*The benefits derived from thus eating and drinking the Lord's Supper*, are pointed out in those words of the institution, "Given and shed for you for the remission of sins:" which words shew us, that forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation, are imparted to us in the sacrament; for where there is remission of sins, there of course, are also life and salvation."

"It is not the eating and drinking that produces such great effects, but that solemn declaration, "which is given

and shed for you, for the remission of sins ;” which words, besides the literal eating and drinking, are considered as the chief thing in the sacrament. Wherefore, whoever truly believes these words, has what they promise, even the forgiveness of sin.” (John, vi. 47.)

“Fasting and bodily preparation, are indeed a good external discipline ; but he alone is truly worthy and well prepared, that believes in these words, “given and shed for you for the remission of sins.” But whoever is void of this faith, or doubts in his mind, is unworthy and unfit ; for the words, “for you,” require truly believing hearts.” (1 Cor. xi. 26-29.)

We will briefly consider the nature, design, and benefits of this institution, together with the state of feeling necessary to procure its blessings, and the obligations it imposes on every disciple of Christ.

I. *Its Nature.*

a. The Lord's supper, like baptism, is *a sacrament*, divinely instituted, and constitutes an important means of grace. It appears, however, from the command of the Saviour, addressed to his disciples in the night in which he was betrayed, that *this sacrament is to be frequently administered* to believers ; whereas baptism, as an initiatory rite, is only to be administered *once* in the case of every individual. “Do this,” said Jesus, “*as often* as ye do it, in remembrance of me.”

b. Like baptism, it is also *symbolical*, and alludes to that body which was extended on the cross, and that blood which was shed for human redemption. Nor is it necessary, in order to attribute to this sacrament the peculiar efficacy assigned to it, to suppose, as some have supposed, (erroneously) that the actual body and blood of Christ are present in the bread and wine. On the contrary, the words

of its institution, plainly admit the popular explanation of the nature of the ordinance. Jesus said on a certain occasion: "Destroy this temple;" not the temple in which we now stand, but *the temple of which this is an emblem*: the temple of my body. And thus the words of the institution of the last supper refer to the same event. "This is my body — this is my blood," that is, thus will my body be broken, and thus will my blood be shed, "for you and for many, for the remission of sins." The symbolic nature of this ordinance is also established, by the fact of its having been instituted in place of the passover. As the feast of the passover, though appointed to commemorate a signal deliverance of the Israelites, was at the same time emblematic of the Lamb that was to be slain upon the cross, so the sacrament of the altar has been instituted with reference to that greater deliverance, which was achieved by the Son of God for the guilty race of Adam.

II. *Design of the Institution.*

This may be inferred from the preceding observations. It may also be inferred from the language of Christ himself: "Do this in remembrance of me." It is evident that this feast was appointed —

a. That Christians might celebrate throughout all ages of the church, the love of their crucified Master. And it is intended to revive in memory, not only the agonies experienced in the garden, and the groans he uttered on the cross, but all the thrilling incidents of a life devoted to the great purpose of human Redemption.

b. It also affords to the believer an opportunity for the renewal of his vows. He not only remembers the sacred pledge already made, but whenever he approaches the altar to taste the consecrated emblems of a Saviour's love, he becomes pledged anew to the service of Christ. For he ac-

knowledges the debt of gratitude he owes, and this acknowledgment involves the most solemn and binding promises.

c. As one of the most important means of grace, it is designed to confirm the believer's faith, and to strengthen him for the discharge of moral duty.

III. *Benefits.*

The benefits derived from this ordinance are said to be "the forgiveness of sin, life, and salvation." We are not to suppose however that these results invariably and necessarily flow from eating the bread and drinking the wine; for many partake of the consecrated elements unworthily, in which case condemnation follows, instead of a blessing. As the saving influence of baptism depends on other circumstances than the mere administration of the rite, so the Lord's supper employs this desirable efficacy, only, in as far as the communicant exercises a living faith. Like the gospel itself, it may be a savor of life or death. When the communicant approaches the table of the Lord, to commemorate his dying love, and to renew the solemn vows of obedience already made; when he comes, having his attention fixed on the Lamb that was slain, and his heart inspired with thankfulness, humility, and joy, at the recollection of the Redeemer's sufferings and death, the act cannot fail to strengthen his faith, to animate his courage, to increase his gratitude, and to secure the approbation of his God. As Luther remarks: "It is not the eating and drinking that produces such great effects, but faith in this solemn declaration, 'which is given and shed for you for the remission of sins.'" To secure the benefits of this ordinance, therefore, it is necessary for the communicant to appropriate to his own soul, that great salvation, which the death of Christ was intended to procure, and to which our attention is directed in the words of the institution. No one indeed, who

fails to do this, can be a fit subject of this ordinance, inasmuch as the phrase "do this *in remembrance* of me," points out this duty. To remember Christ, is to recall to mind that great achievement, which he performed for the guilty soul of man, when he shed his own blood upon the cross. And the believer is commanded to exhibit by means of this ordinance, the gratitude he feels in view of this fond testimony of divine love. But the very existence of this gratitude is an evidence that he has found a refuge, in Christ, from the dreadful penalty of sin. And therefore the ordinance itself can exert a sanctifying influence, only, in as far as the communicant celebrates the love of God, as it is manifested in his own salvation. Or in other words, the humble Christian can alone expect to secure, in eating the bread and drinking the wine, those blessings, which are suspended on *faith* in the declaration: "given and shed for *you* for the remission of sins."

When the Christian approaches the altar, thus actuated by a lively sense of the unmerited goodness, that purchased his redemption from sin, from death, and from the power of the devil, he procures for his soul every spiritual blessing. He is humbled by the conviction of his own guilt. He possesses the assurance of the pardon of all his transgressions, through faith in the promises of him, whose dying love he commemorates. And, persuaded as he is, that this same Redeemer, who instituted this feast to be a perpetual memorial of his affection, now lives and reigns at the right hand of the Father, imparting strength, by means of his spirit, to all his followers on earth, the believer goes forth into the world, prepared anew, to perform all the duties of his sacred profession.

IV. *Its Subjects.*

From the observations already made, it may be inferred

that they alone are worthy partakers of the Lord's supper, who are *a.* persuaded of their own lost condition by nature; *b.* who exercise faith in the atonement, for the pardon of their sins, and reconciliation with God; and, *c.* purpose a life of obedience to the divine law. It follows, that all to whom this ordinance is administered must have attained the age of understanding, so as to be able to comprehend all the duties and promises involved in the celebration of this sacred rite.

V. The obligation imposed on every professed disciple of Christ in reference to this ordinance.

Christians should be *always ready* to commemorate in this appointed way, the love that purchased their redemption. In support of this declaration, two very important reasons may be stated.

a. Every believer pledges himself, in his confirmation vows, to the strict discharge of this interesting duty. Consider this pledge. The minister inquires of the candidate for confirmation — "Do you intend to profess Jesus Christ and his gospel before men without fear or shame, and to be faithful to him until the end of life?" The candidate replies: "I do." To be faithful to Christ is to be obedient to his requirements. And is it not a solemn command of the Saviour himself to all his followers, "*Do this;*" commemorate thus my dying love, and let the remembrance of this love, be revived and perpetuated, by these means, in your hearts. Besides, this commemoration is the very act of professing Jesus Christ and his gospel before men, and this the believer promises to do as long as life lasts, without fear or shame. But is he not guilty of a violation of this promise, when, for some trivial cause, it may be in consequence of his own backslidings, he refuses to taste these memorials of infinite affection. Again: Does not the violation of this

pledge constitute a violation of the second commandment? When the professed disciple of Christ makes these promises, he calls upon God to witness the sincerity of his resolutions, and if he wilfully, and without sufficient reason neglects their performance, has he not taken the name of the Lord in vain?

b. The neglect of the duty imposed by the Saviour on all his followers, when he said: "Do this in remembrance of me," affords a plain evidence of *ingratitude*. In every soul, where there exists a grateful recollection of divine goodness, there must also exist a corresponding desire, to celebrate that goodness in the way appointed by the Great Sacrifice himself. And it follows, that all who avoid that duty, are destitute of that absorbing, that all engrossing thankfulness, which suffers no difficulty to interfere with its manifestation. And how vain are the apologies generally offered for the neglect of this interesting obligation! Ask the professed believer why he was absent from the table of the Lord; and he will perhaps tell you that he is not at peace with his neighbor. But were he as grateful as he ought to be for that bright evidence of the love of God, afforded in the death of his own Son, he would not be restrained, by a difficulty so easily obviated, from the performance and the renewal of his solemn vows. He would first go, and be at peace with his brother, and then come and lay his gift upon the altar. It is to be feared, that could we detect in every instance, the actual cause in which the neglect of this duty originates, it would be found to proceed, in too many cases, from a total forgetfulness of the affection of Christ, and from that love of the world which absorbs every holier and worthier emotion.

It may also be urged in favor of the constant discharge of this duty, that, *a.* whenever conscientiously performed,

it secures important blessings to the soul ; and, *b.* it is a duty imposed by that exalted Redeemer, whose commands, *even were they not sanctioned by our voluntary pledges,* we are required implicitly to obey.

It has been the practice to a great extent, for members of the church to partake of the Lord's supper once, immediately after their confirmation, and then to neglect it for years, perhaps for life. I have conversed with persons who were united to the church, ten, and even, in some instances, twenty years ago, and who have never communed twice at the altar. It is evident (and their own confessions establish the fact) that these individuals have been received into church-fellowship under wrong impressions of truth and duty. We will not stop to point at the results of this mistaken policy ; these are obvious in the spiritual sleep, (as it were the very sleep of death) which still rests upon many congregations. Nor is it necessary to say where the fault of this wide spread evil lies ; this is equally plain. But it is highly essential for every member of the church to entertain correct views on a subject of so much importance, and in regard to which, so many mistaken notions have unfortunately prevailed.

Let every professed believer, therefore, only reflect on the nature and design of this institution, and he will at once perceive that he is individually obligated, by all his solemn pledges, and by that gratitude which he ought ever to feel, to commune frequently at the altar, and renew again and again, this solemn testimony of love to Christ, this interesting pledge of obedience to God.

But there are many enlightened and sincere Christians who at times feel constrained, perhaps, by conscientious motives, to abstain from this ordinance. Let us briefly examine the grounds of this abstinence.

1. The most common excuse for the neglect of this ordinance is *personal unworthiness*. This apology has one circumstance to recommend it ; it is suggested in the case of every true believer by a spirit of becoming humility ; but yet, it is in fact, as groundless as any other. The more unworthy we are, the more deeply are we interested in the great salvation, and the more should our gratitude be excited for that sacrifice which was offered to answer all the demands of a violated law. Indeed, that individual is best prepared to draw near to God in this sacred ordinance, who is most touchingly alive to a sense of his guilt, and who feels constrained to cry out, whenever he looks upon himself, "God be merciful to me a sinner." The most profound humility is a chief characteristic in the moral condition of the worthy communicant, nor should the believer refrain from eating and drinking at the table of his Lord because he is bowed down by sorrow at the recollection of his sinfulness. Individuals thus circumstanced are the very ones whom Christ invites to partake of the riches of his mercy, "Come unto me all ye that are *weary and heavy laden* and I will give you rest." And for the encouragement of the truly penitent he says : "Blessed are they that *mourn*, for they shall be comforted."

The passage recorded in the first epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, (xi. 29.) "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself," has excited many fears in the mind of the true believer. But it must be recollected that this passage, as well as the context, was penned by the sacred writer in allusion to a most glaring and awful *abuse* of this sacred ordinance. It appears to have been the practice of some members of the Corinthian church to change the supper of the Lord into a bacchanalian revel ; and they were guilty of the grossest excess in

eating and drinking, which the apostle justly reproveth. (21, 22.) It is indeed to be feared, that many approach the altar now with unprepared hearts, “not discerning the Lord’s body;” but this cannot be the case with the humble Christian, who trembles under a sense of his own sinfulness. Strictly speaking, all men are unworthy of that tender proof of divine compassion which the sacrament of the altar serves to commemorate; nevertheless that individual partakes *worthily* of a Saviour’s love, who entertains a living faith in his atoning merits, and whilst he humbly confides in the Lamb of God for the gift of eternal life, strives, at the same time, to imitate his example, and to walk in the way of his commandments.

2. Again, it is said: Although I am willing to be at peace with my enemies, *they will not consent to any terms of reconciliation*, and as long as they entertain these feelings of hatred against me, I cannot conscientiously approach the table of the Lord. But the insufficiency of this excuse will be evident, if we recall to mind, that the Saviour himself, who instituted this feast, was surrounded with foes on every hand. If then, like his divine Master, the Christian can cherish and manifest a spirit of forgiveness, and if he can heartily pray to his Heavenly Father in behalf of his bitterest foes, he is prepared to renew his vows to God, by means of this solemn rite.

3. Others are engaged in litigation, and on this ground abstain from the Lord’s supper. It is decidedly wrong for the professed believer to be concerned in a legal contest from choice, or when it may be consistently avoided, and under these circumstances it would be equally wrong to participate in this sacred ordinance. But even the Christian may be drawn into such a contest by actual necessity. The injustice of others may threaten the ruin of his tempo-

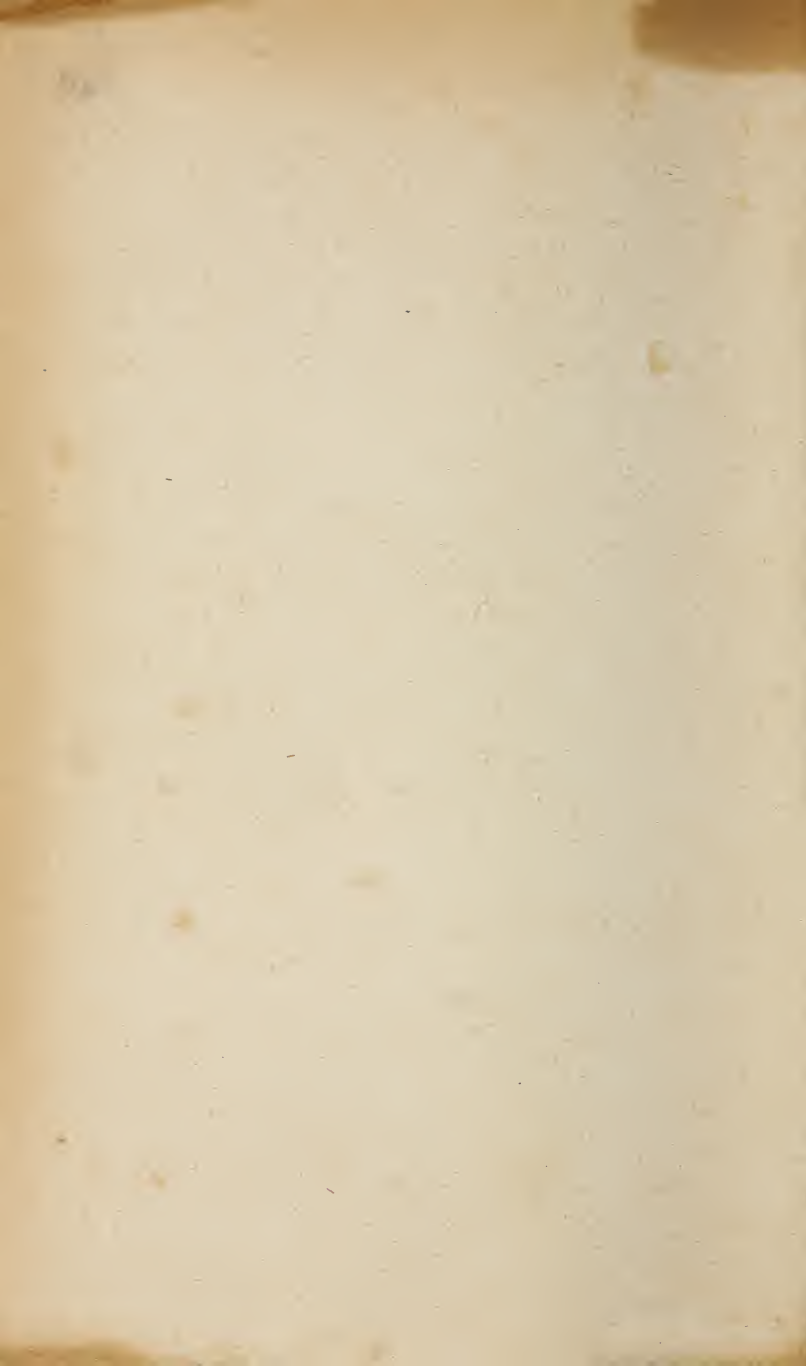
ral interests, and it may be impossible to decide the question of right, which in this case arises, except by referring it to those, appointed as arbiters to settle all matters of controversy, between man and man. When, therefore, a controversy arises between individuals, which cannot be decided without having recourse to the means instituted by law, the professed disciple of Christ may certainly adopt these means without a violation of duty. And if he seeks, in this contest, nothing else than the administration of justice, and cherishes feelings of good will toward the opposite party ; the mere fact, of there being a question of law pending between himself and another, constitutes no apology for the neglect of that duty which Christ enjoined upon all his followers when he gave the command : “ Do this, as often as ye do it, in remembrance of me.”

4. Some complain of *the unworthiness of others*, with whom, they imagine, they cannot consistently approach the altar, in this sacred ordinance. There is often, a glaring inconsistency between the professions and practices of many members of the visible church, and the pious believer may, at times, be startled when he sees individuals engage in this solemn rite, who disgrace their profession, and violate the principles of the gospel in their “ walk and conversation.” But let it not be forgotten, that Christ himself, sat at the table with Judas, his betrayer. However unfit others may be to partake of the consecrated elements, their unfitness cannot affect the humble believer, who eats of that bread and drinks of that wine, to commemorate a Saviour’s dying love. And besides, this apology savors strongly of spiritual pride, and betokens none of that humility which prompts us to “ esteem others better than ourselves.”

Indeed, not one of the excuses generally framed for the neglect of this ordinance, will stand the test of a candid ex-

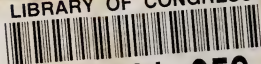
amination. And when we consider the design and nature of the Lord's supper; when we bear in mind that it is emblematic of the great sacrifice offered on Calvary, for the sins of our rebellious race, and that it was instituted to revive, in all ages of the church, and in the hearts of all its members, the condescension and the love of the Creator, it is evident that the obligation of its observance is perpetual and inviolable. No duty can be more interesting and sacred; nothing can constitute a more melancholy proof of unthankfulness, than its habitual neglect. And it becomes the Christian to be ever ready, to celebrate the affection and the triumph of the Lamb of God; — an affection manifested, and a triumph achieved, when he groaned and expired upon the cross.

Q. Of what does the fifth part of the Catechism treat? What is the sacrament of the altar? Which are the words of the institution of the sacrament? What are the benefits derived from thus eating and drinking the Lord's supper? How can corporeal eating and drinking produce such great effects? Who is it that receives this sacrament worthily? In what respect is the Lord's supper like baptism? How often is it to be administered? How often is baptism to be administered in the case of each individual? What was the command of Jesus in regard to the frequency of the celebration of the eucharist? In what other respect is it like baptism *b.*? To what does it allude? Of what was the feast of the passover an emblem? In place of what feast was the Lord's supper instituted? For what purpose was the Lord's supper appointed *a.*? What is it intended to revive in memory? What does it also afford to the believer? For what is it designed, as one of the most important means of grace? What are the benefits derived from this ordinance? What are we not to suppose? When individuals partake of the Lord's supper unworthily, what follows? How far does the Lord's supper employ this desirable efficacy? When does it employ this desirable efficacy? What does Luther remark? What is necessary, therefore, to secure the benefits of this ordinance? What is it to remember Christ? What is the believer commanded to exhibit by means of this ordinance? Of what is the very existence of this gratitude an evidence? Hence, how far can the ordinance itself exert a sanctifying influence? Who alone can expect to secure its blessings?



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